Vol 18 No. 3
130
June1998

THIS ISSUE...

SHIVER YOUR TIMBERS!

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Notes From

Sailing Boldly into Con Season

The first of June marks the start of the summer convention season. This is the time when many of us set course for one or more of the major conventions of the year, and voyage forth to enjoy ourselves.

With Origins in early July, GEN CON® Game Fair and San Diego Comicon in August, and Dragon*Con and Spectrum in early September, not to mention the many other shows, take this opportunity to enjoy the tournament program at its peak, and meet some new friends. Because this is the season for conventions, I thought it would be appropriate to remind you of convention-related information this month.

Tournament Ordering for Conventions

Online tournament ordering is working great! Several people are already using it. The simple process can be accessed from our website <www.tsr.com/rpga>. Choose "Tournaments and Conventions," then "Tournament Ordering." Read the page of instructions and polices for tournament ordering! It answers a lot of questions you may have.

Once you begin to place a convention order, you cannot back out to the instructions page without starting over again, so you might want to have the instructions in a separate browser window while you place your order.

You can also order through the US Mail, by sending in a Tournament Request Form from your Member Handbook. The policies are mostly the same no matter how you order.

Be aware of these points while placing a convention order:

1. Orders must be sent with payment. Orders without payment will be returned. Payment methods include cash, check, money order, or credit card. Gift certificates are not valid for this. You can write credit card number, expiration date, type, and sign the form in the lower right (near the ship-to address).

2. The deadline for orders has been shortened (with regard to advance notice) to allow more small shows to run Network events.

- Orders received via online ordering must arrive one month in advance of the convention date.
- Orders received by US Mail or fax must arrive two months in advance of the convention date.
- Orders which contain requests for new tournaments (also called first-runs) must be received six months in advance.
- The deadline with the most advance time always takes precedence, so online orders with new events must be received six months in advance.
- All scenarios written for a specific convention are due six months in advance, and completed, unless prior arrangements are made. Scenarios which arrive late without prior arrangement will be denied to the convention.

3. Late fees have been simplified. If your request is late, you pay double. If your request contains new scenarios, then some of your new scenarios will be denied. The number denied depends on how late, how many new scenarios you request, how many of those arrive on time, and how cooperative you are generally with the ordering process.

4. Scenarios and requests must be received, by mail or email, by the due date. If you mail the request on the due date, it is late.

5. Emailed scenarios will come to you in PDF format, which means you must have the Adobe Acrobat Reader program to view and print them. The scenario comes with instructions for getting this program, and instructions on which files to email to judges and which you keep. Please follow these instructions. Security for LIVING™ campaign item certificates is a delicate issue, and we may penalize your convention if we trace a cheater's source of illegal certificates to you.

If your convention uses new scenarios, do your part to minimize the chance that the scenarios are rejected. You can help insure quality by reviewing scenarios yourself. Don't submit scenarios you are not proud to have, despite any pressure you may feel. Good older scenarios are better than bad new ones. Get a copy of the completed scenario from the author(s). It does not hurt to submit copies of them all. That way, you know they were submitted.

Tournament Scoring Packets

During 1997, **Don Weatherbee** entered the data from scoring packets. We should be ever grateful to him for this.

However, with the addition of a clerk to process data, the entry of scoring packets has moved back to HQ. Please send all convention materials to HQ after the convention, except for LIVING Campaign Roster Forms. Send those to the addresses listed on the sheets.

To help get convention data posted more quickly, HQ offers incentives to return scoring data quickly:

1. If packets arrive at HQ within four weeks of the convention date, the convention gets a credit of 10 cents a packet towards future tournament orders.
2. If convention organizers enter the

Home Port
TSR, Inc.

Harbormaster
Lisa Stevens

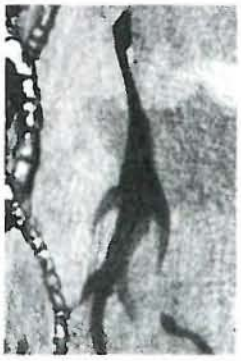
Cap'n
Robert Wiese

Lookouts
Customer Service

All Hands
Donna Woodcock
Paul Alan Timm

Chum
Jeff Quick

COVER STORY: This month's cover was lovingly rendered by artist and detail maniac, Ron Spencer.



data, and send a data file with the scoring packets (or email the data file and send the packets), the convention gets a credit of 20 cents a packet towards future orders.

3. Both entering the data and returning it with the scoring packets to HQ within four weeks of the convention results in 30 cents a packet credit.

Credit can be applied towards future orders for tournaments by the same convention. So if Genghis Con sends in scoring data in a file, then Genghis Con gets the credit. The credit cannot be used by other conventions run by the same organization. This ensures that the people who deserve the credit get it.

Scoring packet entry must be done with an approved program. Currently we have one approved program which runs under Windows 95 or NT, and uses either Excel 95/5.0 or Excel 97. This program is available from HQ; just email or send a disk and ask for it.

We have other programs in the works, especially for Macintosh users. When they are available we will let you know. Scoring data entered in unapproved programs does not count for credit, as we have to re-enter it.

For our part, we pledge to give packets which arrive within four weeks of the convention precedence over other packets, so the quicker you get them in, the quicker the results are posted.

On page 42 of this issue, you will find a list of all conventions within the last two years for which we have received packets. Most have been posted, but a few are still waiting. If you organized a convention not on this list, send in the packets immediately.

RPGA Summit

I have heard lots of you express interest in coming to the first RPGA Summit, October 15-18 here in Seattle. I hope that a whole lot of you come. We will discuss the future, plan new programs, and get to know each other in a different kind of environment from the usual hectic convention.

To continue our plans, we want input on what you want to talk about. I'll have a few things ready, but I'd really like to work on what you want. Write or email your suggestions as to what we should address. Consider it brainstorming; no idea is too big or too little. This is your chance to make of the Network what you want, so get off your duff and start thinking.

Those of you planning to come should send in a letter of registration and $35 as soon as you can. This is pre-reg only, and we must have registrations and payments by the end of GEN CON Game Fair. The more the merrier. Remember, October 15-18 in Seattle. It won't even be raining, probably. We start at 3 p.m. on the 15th and finish by noon on Sunday the 18th. Everyone who wants to participate and take action is welcome.

Gen Con Game Fair

We've got all the judges we need to run a great show this year. We no longer need judges, but we still need players! So come, and bring your friends. Everyone will have a great time and we guarantee to have a game for you to play. What more can you want from the biggest gaming convention in this hemisphere?

We still need a few volunteers in HQ, so if you want to pitch in, we can find a spot for you. HQ volunteers do a lot of vital tasks; we'd love to have you.

New Pets

This month I close with a report on some new pets that the Network has acquired. Don't worry, we don't need you to feed or walk them. They are well taken care of by the Milwaukee County Zoo.

In 1995, the Network sponsored a polar bear named Zero and a few rockhopper penguins. That sponsorship ended this year, but thanks to your generosity at the WINTER FANTASY™ Convention we have not abandoned our animal friends.

With total donations of about $2,800 from WINTER FANTASY, and Dex Con 1997, we have sponsored Zero for two more years. Instead of the rockhoppers, though, this year we take on two ruffed lemurs for a two-year sponsorship. Their names are Kirby and Darby. They are twin (hence one picture; when you've seen one you've seen the other), eight-year-old bachelors, spending their days sunbathing or stretched out near their heaters. Ruffed lemurs are the largest lemurs, at about five pounds and total body length of two feet. Ruffed lemurs live in the east and northwest extremes of Madagascar, eating fruits, flowers, and leaves. Kirby and Darby also get boiled eggs, dog chow, sweet potatoes, and leaf-eater biscuits (which they are not fond of). They also have extremely loud voices, according to the zoo, and use a series of roars which increase in intensity.

Ruffed lemurs are endangered, and Kirby and Darby have been submitted to the Species Survival Plan for transfer to Madagascar. This means that we are helping preserve wildlife. The zoo assures me that we will get reports on their progress after their release, and we can always go visit. Lemur-con, anyone?

Until next time, go carefully.

Robert

You know what I love best about mail? For several minutes each day I kick back and still get work done. Please send me more so I can look even lazier.

Dear Jeff:

Good work on the Poly, keep it up! While only about a dozen have graced my mailbox (Dark Times and all), every issue has impressed the heck out of me. I definitely like the creation of such columns as "Notes from HQ" and "Table Talk." It is very important that HQ keep the membership informed and feeling they're voices are heard. I must admit, though, that I am deeply saddened that The Trumpter no longer graces Poly's Pages, but I can understand how much faster response is when something is planned closer to print time. Can we expect at least a small note insofar as The Trumpter?

I have noticed an increase in articles not involving the LIVING CITY™ campaign, and in some ways I like it. It can seem like the Poly overdoes LC coverage. I am also very pleased Poly is paying more attention to game systems other than AD&D®, like Paranoia, Star Wars, and Call of Cthulu. While these systems may seem small, they are nontheless important. A big thumbs up on improving that.

On a final note, it is good to know that HQ is using all of the many outlets availible to it to reach out to members. The website is the biggest of these improvements, along with the renewal of the Retailer Program. I am also in agreement of how TSR is finally starting to reach out to members (re: polybagged with ALTERNITY® quick-play rules). We, too, are customers, and I'm glad that TSR is taking advantage of that. I was wondering if we can expect to see more of this promotional stuff, or was it just a one-time deal? I know that members with DRAGON® or DUNGEON® magazine subscriptions may be against it, but I think it's cool.

Thanks,

Chris Ruester
Port Orange, FL
<Darkmage76@aol.com>

PS: Give a pat on the back to Tanya! It's good you finally got some help up there. If Poly 128 is a clue, it'll be a blast!

Okay, here's the deal on the issues you raised, Chris.

First, both before and after the Dark Times, we've wanted members to use the magazine to communicate, so we're still trying to expand that. I'm starting to include some con coverage in every issue, and any news you or your club is sitting on, please send it in. We grow faster when we talk to each other!

The Trumpeter is indeed gone from the mag, but it's now available on the web more often, and more thoroughly than we could ever offer here. Find it at: <www.tsr.com/rpga/livingcityindex.html>.

We found a way to keep LIVING CITY stuff in the magazine without forcing it on people, through *City Stories*. Send me your city-related ideas, people, places, and things, LIVING CITY or not. That's what that column is for.

Glad you like the non-AD&D coverage! We plan to keep it up, but nobody panic. We still have plenty to fill your AD&D jones.

The new and retooled avenues of outreach are indeed wonderful. We love them daily here at HQ. If you haven't been, go now <www.tsr.com/rpga>.

Oh, and consider Tanya's back patted for her good work. More to come.

Hello:

My name is Franco Merea, and I used to be an RPGA member (between '94 and '95 if I remember well). I didn't renew because the benefits given were too USA- and Canada-centered, although I admit I liked most themes in POLYHEDRON magazines.

My question is: now that internet makes international contact so much easier, what benefits are you giving to us, overseas possible members. Unfortunately, here in Peru, we have no RPG Association or anything similar. To be quite sincere, although increasing, we are not a potential role playing games market yet. Well, having no more questions, I thank you beforehandely for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Franco Merea
<932449@aloe.ulima.edu.pe>
University of Lima

The web is the biggest outreach tool we have right now, but it's a great one. No matter where you are, you can start your own convention and order tournaments from us. We'll email adventures to you, and you're ready to go.

We also have a chat room on our website, so as long as you have web access, you can talk to, and roleplay with people in the RPGA.

A non-TSR place I'd recommend is the Companions of the Unicorn. They specialize in Play By Email games, and even though the organization is intended for Canadians, they have worldwide membership. Their site is at <www.geocities.com/~phocas>, and worth the visit.

Thanks for writing everyone! Please keep sending letters and emails. You help when you do.

—JEFF

Table Talk

Kick a Kender

Remember the LEGENDS OF THE LANCE™ newsletter? You can still get it for the low, low price of FREE. Just write to LEGENDS OF THE LANCE newsletter; Box 707; Renton, WA; 98057-0707or email: <legends@wizards.com>. Be sure to include your normal mailing address!

Silver Bullets in The LIVING DEATH™ Campaign

From time to time the question occurs in the LIVING DEATH™ campaign regarding availability of silver bullets, and the damage they do.

The Gunsmith Proficiency allows for the making of special ammunition. However, silver melts at a much higher temperature than lead. You would need access to a blow torch (or forced air furnace) to melt enough silver to make the bullets. You also need special equipment to make silver bullets. You also need silver.

The following list is the cost per bullet for the raw silver to make bullets:
derringer—10 cents
navy pistol—30 cents
army pistol—50 cents
rifle—60 cents

The additional cost of the equipment is:
blow torch and vise—$20
small forced air furnace—$65

Those without the proficiency can buy silver bullets in small quantities from larger ammunition suppliers. They see it as a novelty item and do not keep large numbers handy (1d10 of any one type will be available once per adventure if a company is in the area). Eley Bros. LTD., of London, Birmingham, Glasgow, and Liege (Belgium) are one such company.

Silver bullets do -1 point of damage per die, so an army pistol which does 2d6 +1 with normal bullets, does 2d6-1 with silver bullets.

From the Spring 1998 *Ink Blot*

('Zine of the Fellowship of the Black Spot)
by Erica Woolums

"I have to begin this month's article by apologizing to Jeff "Skippy" Quick, editor of the POLYHEDRON....You see, I screwed up... by referring to the illustrious Mr. Quick by the name of one of his predecessors, Skip Williams. I'm afraid I inadvertently insulted the poor man while trying to pay him a compliment. If I may be allowed to correct myself now, I'd like to say, 'Good job on the POLYHEDRON, JEFF!!! Keep up the quality work!!!' There, I feel better now."

Jeff's response:

Thank you for the kind words, Erica. All is forgiven. Even the fact that you got my nickname wrong in print. It's "Zippy," not "Skippy."

I used to give people hard noogies for calling me Skippy. Fortunately, I am much wiser now and merely shave their pets when they're not at home.

The Inevitable Corrections Box:

In the *Virtual Seattle* update in Poly 128, point 7 of the article had a street index limit of 1.25. This contradicts the sourcebook sidebar that says 1.75. **The correct number is 1.25.** Check Wes' web site: <www2.dynamite.com.au /wes/vsindex.htm> for details.

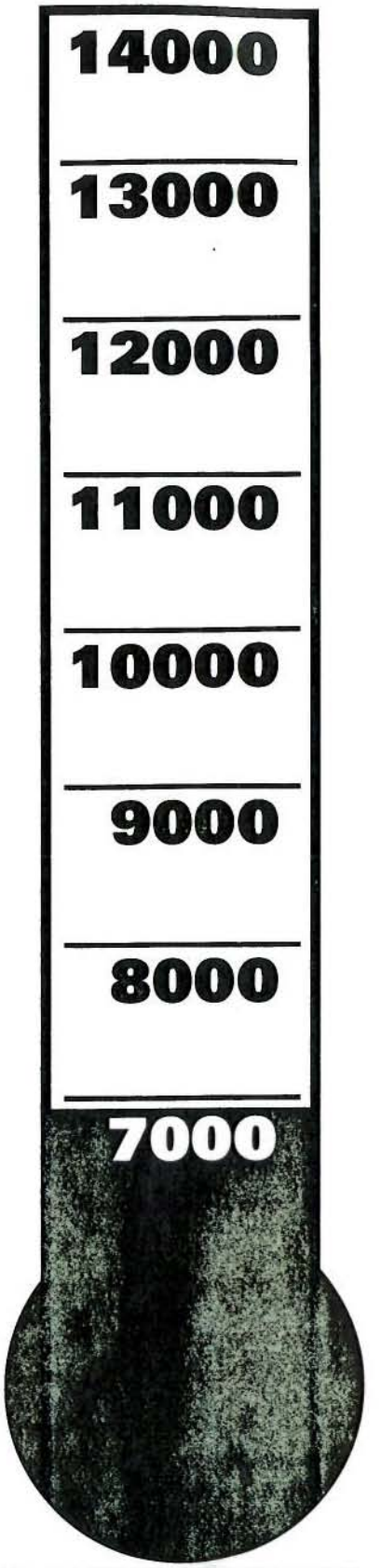
NEXT ISSUE BOX

Decathlon Winners—Sidekicks

Superteam Nuts & Bolts

internet gaming resources

Even more than that.



SLOW BURN

Very good, my minions. Look to the right for further instructions.

your bookshelves aren't full Enough.

Drive Me Crazy!

You want to talk about driving me crazy... I forgot last issue to mention that this offer is good for GUILD-LEVEL™ MEMBERS ONLY! You only get the goods if your new people fork over the bux. If you're not sure how we'll know it's you, just have the new joiner write "referred by [your name]" on the back of the card or paper. We have a blank on our website for this too.

1 recruit!

- **free module from our list**
  We got a giant stack of AD&D® modules, and we're throwing them at you! Woohoo!

2 recruits!

- **LIVING [thing] t-shirt—your choice**
  Clothe yourself in style! OR...
- **FIVE back issues of Polyhedron**
  A veritable grabbag of wonderment!

3 recruits!

- **product pack**
  STUFF from a product line! OR...
- **adventurer's guild**
  a "best of" pack from our retailer program!

5 recruits!

- **Double pack of producty fun**
  twice the STUFF as 3 recruits! OR...
- **service shirt—"special"**
  a special shirt available nowhere else! OR...
- **free club membership**

10 recruits!

- **Mondo pack of rpg goodness**
  you know all that product STUFF at other levels? It's all smashed together here! A pile of it!

15 recruits!

- **RPGA briefcase**
  This is our totally new, non-cheapo messenger-style bag. It holds books, dice, pencils... even items unrelated to gaming!

100 recruits!

FREE TRIP TO GEN CON '99!

LOSE MY DICE AND CALL ME JIMMY! LOOKY THAR!!

Can you even believe it? Find 100 new people, we'll pay for lodging, games, food, and admission to Gamer Nirvana! Plus more stuff to make you a minor celebrity!

Rules &tc.

Here's the deal: every GUILD-LEVEL member who signs up and says you convinced him or her to join is a recruit for you. Only individual recruitment counts! Club recruitment is great, but recruits must specify a person at the time they join. If the recruit does not specify, he or she does not count towards your grand total!

A "new member" is someone who has never been a member or whose membership expired before 1998. So don't try to pull a fast one, see?

Product packs come in several flavors. Pick your favorite!

- D&D and AD&D
- AL-QADIM® setting
- BIRTHRIGHT® setting
- DARK SUN® setting
- DRAGONLANCE® setting
- FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting
- GREYHAWK® setting
- LANKHMAR® setting
- MYSTARA® setting
- PLANESCAPE® setting
- RAVENLOFT® setting
- SPELLJAMMER® setting

When ordering, list your top three choices, in case we run out. After all, at the rate this stuff goes, we can't guarantee the contents or availability of any package...

At the end of August, we'll tally everyone up, announce the grand total here in Poly, and name the BIG WINNERS. Chances are good that if you shoot for 100 and fall short, we'll still find something cool to reward you for your efforts.

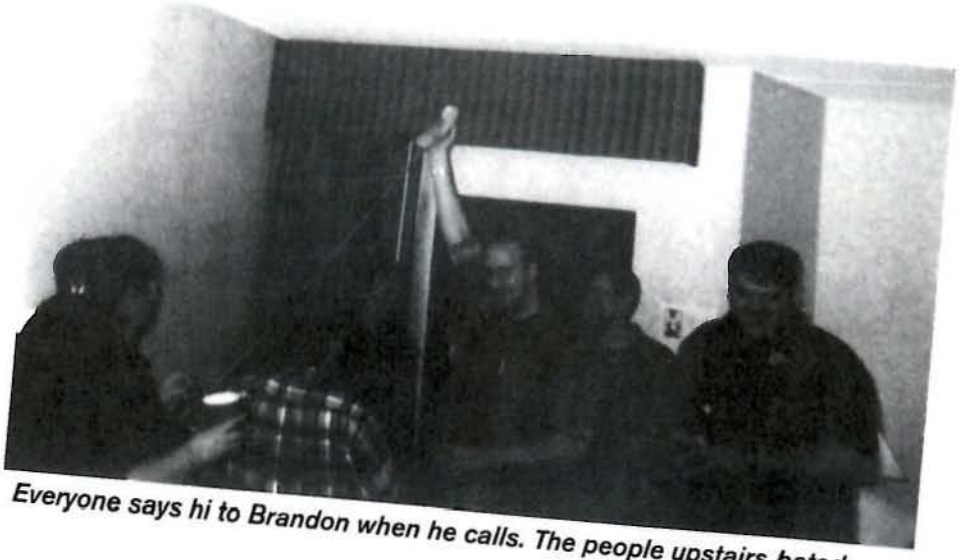
Table Talk CT

ConnCon

by Jeff Quick, Delicious Monkey

I love cons. I love playing the games, hanging out with people, crashing the parties, browsing the dealer rooms, picking up all the free crap on the front tables... I love it all. How fortunate that it is part of my job to go.

My most recent foray into conventions was Conncon, March 20-22, in Four Seasons hotel not far from Waterbury, CT. The hotel's interior seemed made for a LIVING JUNGLE™ Interactive! They had a courtyard full of thick foliage surrounding a good restaurant, with plenty of space for gaming on several floors. Though the con was a bit spread out, things went very smoothly, thanks to the organization by the lovely and talented **Willi "Sleep-Is-For-The-Weak" Burger**.



Everyone says hi to Brandon when he calls. The people upstairs hated us.

RPGA Australia coordinator, Uncle Wes, shows off his two best mugs.

The con kicked off Friday night with games and a little last-second snow for the weekend. I managed to jump into a couple of games and, almost played in a Virtual Seattle game in Conncon's dangerous after midnight slot. Fortunately I weaseled out and slept.

Saturday was lots more gaming including a slew of LIVING CITY™ games. In addition to other merriment, I played a pre-release adventure for the Hercules & Xena RPG from West End Games. Sure it's another fantasy game, but it's Yahoo Gaming, one of my favorite styles of play.

For the uninitiated, Yahoo Gaming allows you to do any barely reasonable thing you can think of, like throwing a shield to knock somebody out, or firing at the control panel to make a door shut. West End specializes in these types of games, and in the Herc & Xena RPG, you can try just about any over-the-top thing that they do in the show. And why play the Hercules & Xena RPG if you can't do all the stunts they're famous for?

After that, I got myself invited to a big party hosted by Death Warmed Over (DWO), one of our super-cool clubs in the northeast who turned out in force. This is perhaps the only party in existence which incorporates a collectible invitation game into the festivities. Beverages were passed around, we all talked loudly late into the night.

Hotel security had to call us more than once to get us to shut up. These warnings lasted perhaps as many as seven minutes before we were back in the 80 decibel range again.

This was not any mere party however. It was the "Where in the World is **Brandon Amancio**?" party, a tribute to DWO's globe-trotting, wandering member. Bizarrely, Brandon called in the middle of the party from Australia, to check up on things and say hi.

Sunday morning games must have happened, but I was unconscious for most of them. Nonetheless, if you live anywhere near the New England area, go to Conncon next year. It's big fun.

My next con is Origins in Columbus, Ohio, on July 4 weekend. Find me and introduce yourself. I may have presents.

Egyptian Campaign

by Catherine Keene

Egyptian Campaign '98 held in Carbondale, IL was a success and we were happy to receive the support from the RPGA® Network. We boasted 753 people through the door and hosted approximately 300 various role playing, board, miniature, and CCG events. Only 33 of these events were RPGA, but we are actively looking for ways to increase our RPGA attendance, and therefore the number of tables hosting RPGA events. If anyone has any ideas, please let us know.

For the third year, we gave away ribbons to all of the winners of RPGA events, and a trophy to the first place/overall points scorer of the two round tournament.

The RPGA Membership Program met with a great deal of success. We asked all RPGA players, new members and old, to sign in at the registration desk. Each person who signed in got a silver star on their name tag. All of the Judges remembered to check to see if their players had a silver star, and sent those that didn't to the registration desk where we had them sign in after making them members or checking their cards.

Two-round AD&D winners: Big (overall, that is) winner Chad la Montague leans in with first placers winner Julie Ratliffe and Charles Carroll.

The process took about five minutes at the beginning of a few games, but guaranteed that all of our players were members, and that we had information on hand for the couple of players whose scoring sheets were lacking information.

The players seemed pleased with the simplicity of the system and free memberships. (By the way, we did the same for DCI members, but gave them a blue star.) One time registry worked really well and centralized the bookkeeping.

PARTY INVITATION

The First And Hopefully Only Where in the World Is Brandon Amancio? Party!

AP Milwaukee Wisconsin: Reports from city officials have confirmed that a local drinking establishment has survived unparalleled contest this past evening and that the throne of the Milwaukee Dance King remains unblemished... The challenger to the throne was last seen by the Russian Mir Space Platform...

Sat. 9pm, Room: 171

Customizable collectible party invitation
Where in the World... Expansion Set

Bane of Bib - Destroy this card to force Bib (If you don't know who Bib is, you'd better pay close attention...) to assign your target with a nickname of his choice. Bib has the right to appeal to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse for creative suggestions.

Invitation Required!

Your only ticket in to DWO's party was the customizable collectible party invitation.

ConnCon's two 10 Year Judges, Dale King and Mike Buonagurio, show off their trophies. It was a weekend for mugs.

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

The Border Kingdoms

by Ed Greenwood

The Land of Two Princes

Our look at the Border Kingdoms this month reaches a fascinating, if perilous, realm sometimes reminiscent of Cormyr. Its strange tale is, according to Elminster, something "Every fool of an adventurer would do well to learn all about."

Nestling between the River Scelptar and the northern edge of the Shaar, this realm is home to the grasping, bustling walled town of Gallard, whose merchants are as sharp as those of Waterdeep or any Sembian town. The real seat of power in the endlessly-wartorn kingdom, Gallard turns its back on the "crazed" doings of the rulers of the land it stands in. Galardians are far too busy making coins to worry about the romantic foolishness that drives their fellow citizens.

The Land of Two Princes is pleasant rolling country, of orchards, good roads, small farms, and ruined keeps. Locally, the keeps are known as "strongholds", though elsewhere they'd be termed "follies."

If the realm is viewed as a broad shield with the river as its top edge and Gallard at its point, its only other two features of note are the castles of the two princes. Corthgrolt sits at the western top corner of the shield, and Revelrar rests at the eastern. Both castles stand on bluffs overlooking the river. Both are as ornate and beautiful as any fancy nobles' castle in or around Waterdeep. And both are home to what the adventurer Steeleye called "romantic dolts."

The realm was founded by two rival knights of Cormyr (exiled together for rebellion against the ruling House of Obarskyr). They worked together to slay or drive out the petty lordlings who ruled the land they fancied, assisted each other in building castles at either end of the verdant realm, and then promptly quarreled, unable to agree on which of them should rule or even what the land should be called. Their temporary Hall of Two Thrones, set up at the midpoint of the realm, was abandoned after barely a summer, and has since vanished completely.

The two knights were Sir Galdarr Amcorth (who styled himself "Prince Amrath," taking his middle name, and lording it over the western end of the realm) and Sir Dorvon Meldrist (who took the title "Prince Balard," after the most popular name in use in his family, and ruled the eastern end of the realm). They issued conflicting decrees, and armsmen loyal to each of them skirmished up and down the realm throughout one long and bloody year, until each of them declared himself sole Prince, and ordered the other butchered.

The rivals finally met and slew each other at a crossroads, Appletree, as winter came on; one employing a beast-tamer and his trained monsters, the other a "small spells" mageling. When both men had been buried, the most capable of the warriors who'd come from Cormyr with them, one Flaerth Beltrusk, attempted to rule—but was murdered at his first council meeting, by the kin of the two dead Princes.

At that same cold and sinister council, the rival families of Amcorth and Meldrist agreed to contest rulership of the realm under certain strict conditions—agreed to by both, and enforced by a spell that promised to consume them all "by wildfire of the blood in the veins" if they broke any part of the agreement.

Its terms can be summarized as follows: no family member shall draw weapon or cast spell against a member of the rival family; poison and all sorts of bows shall not be used; magic of any sport shall not be wielded against any rival, or either of the two home castles or folk within their walls, by any family member; and the strife between the two

houses shall be decided solely by contest between hired warriors, not to exceed three persons per living family member.

To win the realm, these hired combatants must control every part of the land save the rival castle and Gallard, and have captive at least two members of the rival family, of either or both of its eldest two living generations. The losers are to have safe conduct to flee the land; the winners gain its rule outright.

Generations of Amcorths and Meldrists have come and gone, and the endless battle has raged, becoming a gallant contest of gleaming armored knights on horseback thundering through the trees, and acquiring some unwritten additional rules: crops and property are to be despoiled as little as possible, and no danger is to be offered to those not in the hunt for the crown—in other words, knights hacking at each other will pause to ride around an old farm-woman with a handcart of apples, and then continue with their deadly fray.

The farmers of the realm regard this craziness with a certain cynical fondness. They're used to it, it makes their land special, and it confirms opinions that nobility are all unworthy of their powers, and unsound of mind.

The Amcorths and Meldrists both maintain investments in Gallard, other Border lands, and elsewhere in Faerûn. They even nod to each other civilly should they meet. But their armsmen rage up and down the realm in an endless game of blood, while the grasping Galardian merchants pay no attention at all, and visiting travelers gape in bemusement. Some of the younger family members train themselves in arms and try their hand at devising strategies to win the endless struggle, but in the main, they sip wine, play at cards or board games, and leave the battles to their hirelings, often watching the "evening fun" of gore and striving through various enchanted scrying devices.

It is an offense punishable by instant execution to travel or act in the Land of Two Princes as a committed hireling of either side without clearly bearing the badge of the family one is acting for. A large golden lion's-head, face on and in a golden circle enclosing a brown field is the symbol for the Amcorths. A purple-antlered, white-skinned stag with a silver dagger clenched in its teeth, facing to the dexter, inside a white circle enclosing a field of blue, for the Meldrists. Of course, the rival forces have become known as "the House of the Lion" and "the House of the Stag."

Young, restless would-be knights, and armsmen wanting to gain experience in frays free from deadly magic, come to the Land of Two Princes from all over Faerûn to hire on with the Lions or the Stags. Bribery (to join the service of a House, to look the other way at crucial moments, or to change sides) is allowed in the struggle. Desertion is quite possible given the small size of the land. Many warriors fall in battle.

Given these three things, those who stay alive, avoid being caught in the fray and stay committed to it ('the Hunt' seems to have its own alluring magic; many who survive a season or more become deeply loyal to one family or the other, and devote the balance of their lives to the struggle) can often escape much the richer.

In the Hunt, warriors can win coin, equipage, and stature. Warriors gain the mounts, armor, and weaponry of fallen comrades, or receive relics of the slain from their employers; and both families hand out knighthoods like weekly sugar-offerings to faithful horses.

A visitor to the Land of Two Princes will often see bands of armed and armored men racing past, and swordplay occurring within the approved follies that dot the realm. The main road (linking the land with Bedorn to the west and Blackbarn and Hawkgarth to the east) runs diagonally south to Gallard and then back up to the river again, forming a giant 'V,' and the hamlets of the realm all lie along it, usually at crossroads where minor farm lanes link up, after crossing the central gulf of the 'V.'

On the western arm of the road, these hamlets (from Corthgrolt at the western border of the realm, going southeast to Gallard) are: Runcerin; Sholbrut's Gard, Umble, and Dlackbridge.

On the eastern arm (from Revelrar at the eastern border, going southwest to Gallard), these hamlets are Bucklegrim, Starshroud, Appletree, and Ornar's Belt.

Our tour of the realm will continue in the next column.

It's a dance of drawn swords, hard riding, and betrayal that never ends.

—Saldaran Skullshields
Knight of the Bright Stone
to his colleague Dalter

Splendid, some call it—I am no longer among them.

Year of the Prince

City Stories

Temple of Chauntea: House of Bountiful Harvest

by Keith Hoffman

The House of Bountiful Harvest in Ravens Bluff is located in the Temple District, along Mackintire Path at Vesper Way North .

Chauntea (Chawn-TEE-ah), is the Great Mother, and Goddess of Agriculture. She differs from other gods of nature in her dual support of agriculture and natural wilderness. Farming parables are found in her teachings, growing and reaping are common themes. Destruction for its own sake is anathema to Chauntea.

She is commonly worshiped by farmers and gardeners and is most powerful in settled and civilized areas of the north. The clerics minister in towns and cities, while the druids work in the outlying and wild areas. The relationship between the two wings is usually cordial.

Duties of priests include: guidance, marriage, observation of annual celebrations at start of winter and spring. Vigilance against any threat to a community's ability to grow its food is a priority. Chauntea has large shrines and temples, but services are often held in small caverns or open fields, temples surrounded by greenry. Chauntea's priests dress simply and without pretension. (The Earthmother of Moonshae is an aspect of Chauntea.)

Description and Insides

The temple is a two story, U-shaped wood building (140 feet across the front) that has finely carved panels depicting scenes of planting, weeding, and reaping as well as other natural scenery.

The attractive but unimposing structure is clearly not a fortification. Past the front door, which stands open most of the day, a passage leads directly to a neatly landscaped grassy hollow with short stone pillars (menhirs). A perpetually flaming firepit forms a triangle with the pool and a holy water basin on a marble pillar. A sense of calm envelops the hollow as if no harm can come here.

The ground is consecrated. One of the menhirs has a focus spell with *protection from evil*. A second menhir has a focus spell with *dispel evil*. A third menhir has a focus spell with *remove fear*. The spells are renewed annually at three temple rituals. Beyond the hollow is the temple gardens where vegetables, flowers, and herbs are grown.

Map Legend

1. The rose-covered arbor entrance with double doors that normally stand open. A sign "House of Bountiful Harvest" with both old and new holy symbols of Chauntea is on the wall.
2. Entrance Hall
3. Greeter cleric room w/trap door for access to cistern
4. Library
5. Sitting room
6. Meditation room
7. Hall
8. Kitchen
9. Pantry
10. Garderobe
11. Bath
12. Secret Chamber—a spot of safety in case of invaders in the temple
13. Trap door to midden
14. sign on wall —"Only Worshippers of Chauntea Past This Point" (in commom) and Holy Symbol
15. Sitting Chamber - shared between Arabella and Jacob
16. Jacob's Chambers
17. Arabella's Chambers

17a. Secret closet—Arabella stores clerical scrolls and holy books in here.

18. Consecrated hollow and worship area
19. Temple gardens
20. Guest Chambers
21. Common room
22. Cleric quarters
23. Closet for cleaning supplies
24. Outer room with two signs: (a) "Thieves Turn Back!" and (b) "Guarded by the Power of Chauntea!"
25. Root cellar
26. Dry food storage area
27. Archive seed storage - also has emergency seed supply for farmers in area.
28. Midden
29. Locked and barred gate with a sign—"May You Rest in Peace"
30. Temple treasure vault

30a. Secret chamber

31. Tools storage
32. Storage of mundane temple supplies
33. Armory
34. Festival supply room—tents, tables, banners, and other equipment for civic and religious holidays (a requirement of the civic religion)

Cistern—holds rainwater collected from roof for temple needs. This close to the sea, near surface ground water is bound to be bad.

Letters represent spells set by Arabella (not counting spells on the menhirs). All glyphs are set to activate when non-worshipers of Chauntea pass.

A. Glyph of Warding—Hold Person
B. Glyph of Warding—Dispel Magic (at 15th level)
C. Continual Light (automatically dispelled by glyph B activation and serves as a signal)
D. Glyph of Warding—Fire (15d4 hp, save for half)
E. Glyph of Warding—Electrical (15d4 hp, save for half)
F. Glyph of Warding—Blade Barrier (15d4 hp, save for half, lasts rounds)

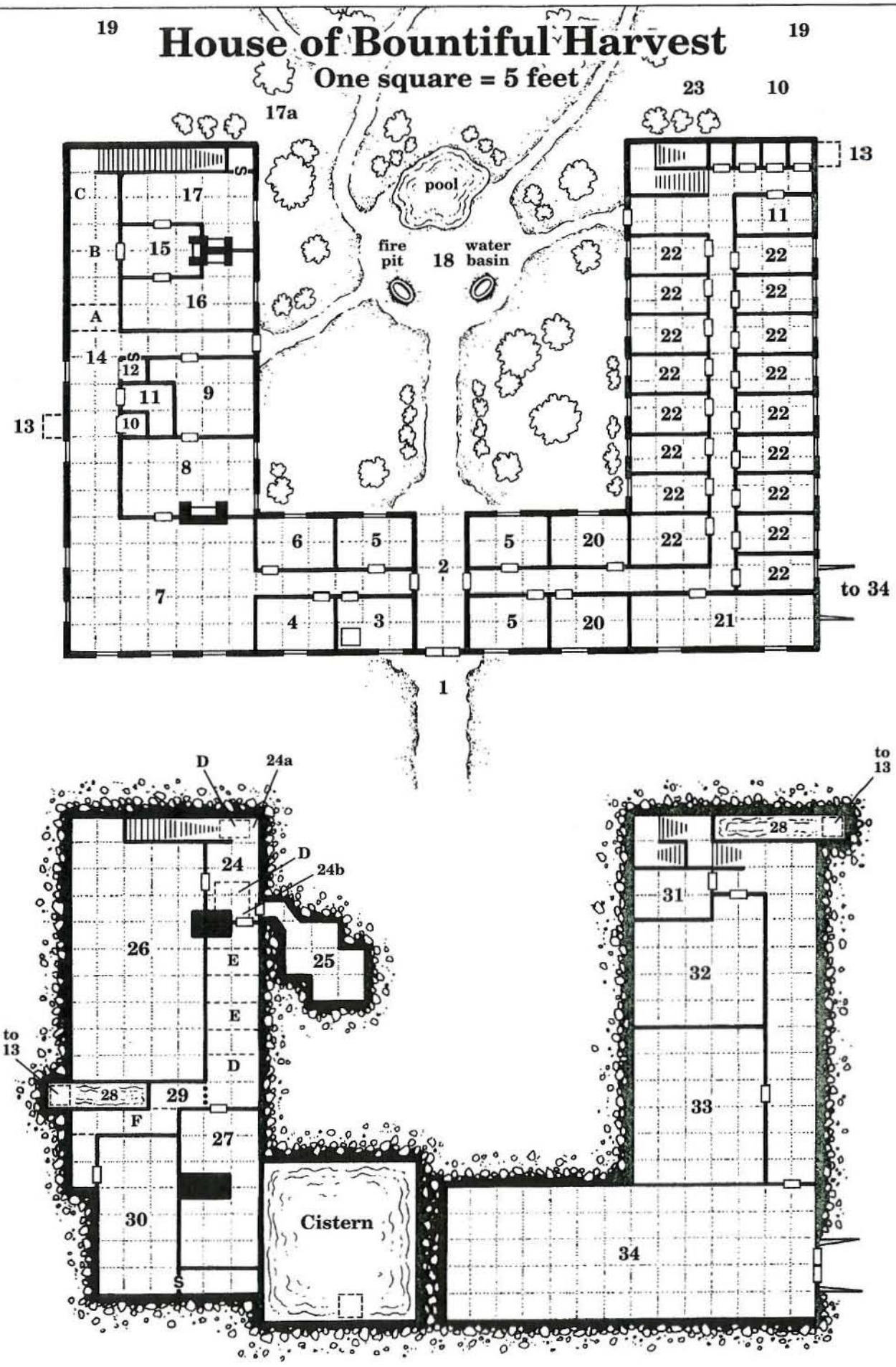
Key Personalities of the Temple

Arabella of Chauntea
High Harvestmistress of Ravens Bluff
Human Female, 15th Level Cleric
Age: 62
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 160 lbs.
Hair: red, turning gray
Eyes: brown
Alignment: Neutral Good

Arabella is the high priestess (High Harvestmistress) of Chauntea in Ravens Bluff. She presides over public festivals of planting and harvesting as well as other temple rituals. Her skin is weathered and brown from spending much of her life outside, and she has an old scar

House of Bountiful Harvest

One square = 5 feet



on her left hand.

Her usual clothing is a brown robe with gold embroidered belt. (A trowel hangs from the belt.) Chauntea's holy symbol always hangs from a leather throng around her neck. Arabella usually carries a bag on a strap which holds seeds, herbs, and assorted items. She never walks anywhere without her staff.

Arabella is a member of the Clerical Circle, but has no interest in heading the Clerical Circle. She delegates most political responsibilities to Harvestmaster, Jacob Shumway.

Arabella enjoys her gardening and studying the history of the Vast. She owrks in the temple garden and is writing an account of the founding of Ravens Bluff. During the weekly charity day (when the temple dispenses food to the needy) Arabella is often among the followers distributing food.

Arabella still has a firm, strong voice and can bring peace to most arguments. She makes friends easily; soliciting, listening, and considering the counsel of others before making decisions. She dislikes recent politics of Ravens Bluff. Arabella will champion the betterment of the common citizens. She is unrelenting against the priests of Talos and the Gods of Fury.

Arabella was born to a farmer's family near Elturel. She was enchanted with the Winter Garden in the city as a child and there met a cleric of Chauntea tending the Garden. She was apprenticed to the temple of Chauntea at the age of 13, becoming a priestess at the age of 18. She spent many years traveling with many adventuring groups. Finally, at the age of 50, she grew tired of the wandering life and asked to be assigned to a city temple. Given her vast adventuring experience, she was posted to the newly growing Ravens Bluff. That was 16 years ago.

Jacob Shumway of Chauntea
Harvestmaster of Ravens Bluff
Human Male, 9th Level Cleric
Age: 49
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 220 lbs.
Hair: black, cut short
Eyes: hazel
Alignment: Neutral Good

Jacob normally wears brown leather armor with a rich brown cloak and carries a mace on his belt.

He takes care of administrative work and handles temple politics except where the High Harvestmistress is required.

Jacob enjoys negotiating, drinking, and brewing beer. He tends to support farmers and woodcutters in efforts to "tame the wilderness." Jacob is not as comfortable with the druids as Arabella is, but he is very fond of halflings.

Jacob likes formality, procedure and neatness. He acts quickly in the face of obvious evil or attack on the temple. He offers advice to Arabella, but still obey sher instructions. On occasion, Jacob has indulged in his beer too much and been subjected to criticism from Janice.

Patricia Caraway of Chauntea
Human Female, 6th Level Cleric
Age: 40
Height: 6' 0"
Weight: 140 lbs.
Hair: blonde
Eyes: blue
Alignment: Neutral Good

Patricia is cheerful and friendly. She takes her duties seriously and relaxes by cooking. She spends her free time in the temple kitchen and relishes preparing meals for worshipers of Chauntea.

Patricia appears awkward when walking or running, but her hands are very precise with small details. Her face is pock-marked from a childhood disease. Patricia always wears a brown robe.

She is responsible for training the initiates and lower level clerics in addition to pulling "healing duty" on the seriously injured or diseased who stay overnight or may need house calls. She uses her healing proficiency first, then casts spells, then uses potions.

Patricia tends to be informal. She considers Jacob a pain at times, but he loves her cooking. She and Janice are close friends.

Libron of Chauntea
Half-Elf Male, 6th Level Cleric
Age: 62
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 135 lbs.
Hair: brown
Eyes: green
Alignment: Neutral Good

Libron's skin is pale. He usually wears black studded leather with a brown cloak. He is a quiet and secretive man. He can be engaging in conversation but can also fade into the background. Libron likes to read histories of the Vast and neighboring regions. He is knowledgable of the history of Ravens Bluff. He believes that knowledge, a keen intellect, and proper planning can defeat brute force any day.

Libron is responsible for care of the holy items, preparation for rituals and festival blessings, and oversees the temple library. He has the secret duty of gathering intelligence from the temple's traveling clerics and associate druids about neighboring states and independent cities.

Libron keeps Arabella informed, but likes to surprise the other clerics with his knowledge. He tends to mediate disputes and propose compromises with the druids and the other temples. He considers Jacob to be pompous. Libron likes Patricia and Janice but does not spend much time with them.

Janice of Chauntea
Human Female 5th Level Cleric
Age: 33
Height: 5' 5"
Weight: 140 lbs.

Hair: brown, waist-length, braided
Eyes: brown
Alignment: Neutral Good

Janice has a cheery disposition and devotes her full attention to a conversation. She moves quickly and gracefully.

She is responsible for counseling and educating worshipers, dealing with routine problems of temple visitors, and manages the temple charity day.

Janice enjoys working with children. She hopes to marry and have a family of her own someday. She is perceptive about other people and their true feelings. She strongly disapproves of drunken behavior.

Other temple clerics:
3rd Level: Wynn Bird, Benjamin Furrow.
2nd Level: Franklin Maple, Martha Loam, George Storm.
1st Level: Melissa Drover, Carmon Tessler, Penelope Heartbow.
Novices: Xena Phobia, Vail Rosehill, Puck, Oliver Tango, Nicolas Biden.

Issues within the church and temple of Chauntea

1) The split between the clerics and druids of Chauntea is principally over the long-standing issue: should mortals hold dominion over nature or live in balance?

The clerics of Chauntea hold that "man" can exploit the bounty of nature and safeguard it at the same time. Raising crops and logging timber can be done for profit with care. The druids of Chauntea hold that harvesting beyond one's needs is a mistake and only leads to misery.

2) An issue of concern to many is actions of Melissa Eldaren, a druidess of Silvanus and former Lord Speaker of Ravens Bluff. Some believe she entered politics to bypass the Clerical Circle. Others are more concerned about her druid's grove just outside of Ravens Bluff. The grove's proximity to the city is unusual for the Oak Father's druids.

3) The relationship between the druids and clerics of Chauntea in the area is strained. The causes include long-standing differences over man vs. nature, resentment of the new temple in Shadowdale (replacing the druids' circle), the clerics' expanding influence in The Vast, bad feelings due to Melissa Eldaren's actions, and, a few claim, the manipulations of the Shadow Circle. A young cleric, Ivy Merryweather, is working to heal the split between the druids and the clerics.

Festivals of the House of Bountiful Harvest

Rituals and festivals of the civic religion are important public events for all to participate in. The civic rituals are in addition to more frequent regular rituals, attended by devout citizens.

The Arming (Tarsakh 4)
This festival commemorates the rise of farmers and merchants to defeat raids in mountains south of Ravens Bluff. In the country, militias are mustered, weapons inspected, and feasts held.

Within Ravens Bluff, a commemorative festival is held. Outside the city walls clerics hold contests of weapon skill, jousting, and athletic ability. Inside the city, two feasts are held. City officials, guild officials, priesthood, and other dignitaries attend a private celebration while the public can purchase entrance to a public feast. The House of Bountiful Harvest helps with the public feast but is not the sole sponsor.

The Plowing (Mirtul 6)
This is a day when the ground is broken for planting all over The Vast. In Ravens Bluff, the House of Bountiful Harvest sponsors this civic festival. Tables of food—meats, soups, bread, cheese, onions, and sugared pastries—are set in public squares and casks of beer are opened. The banners of Ravens Bluff and the holy symbol of Chauntea are displayed. There is no fee, but clerics encourage offerings.

The Harvest is a late fall celebration of the successful harvest. Private feasts are the rule. Melons, harvest stew, and game birds are favored food. The House of Bountiful Harvest distributes food baskets to needy worshipers, poor houses, infirmaries, and orphanages. A feast in the temple is held for devout worshipers.

Religious Rituals
These rituals are held within the temple. Clerics, followers, and devout worshippers are welcome; others are not.

Spring (vernal equinox)— prayers for blessing the coming year's crops and births; renewal of *protection from evil* spell.

Summer (summer solstice)— prayers for health, strength, and defense; renewal of *dispel evil* spell.

Fall (autumnal equinox)— prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings of Chauntea, offerings for departed souls, and renewal of *remove fear* spell.

Winter (winter solstice)—praying for wisdom and courage; casting divination spells for knowledge of future dangers and guidance from Chauntea.

Keepers of the Mystic Flame

by Carl Buehler

The Keepers of the Mystic Flame is a knightly order dedicated to protecting Ravens Bluff and its citizens from magical threats. It assists the City Watch in policing the use of magic and seeks to prevent evil or reckless use of magic. With the Temple of Mystra, The Keepers also assist in the location and recovery of dangerous magical items.

In addition, The Keepers counter infiltration by certain foreign powers.Opposing the Zhentarim and the Red Wizards, a sect of The Keepers has formed a secret society to combat their foes. This NPC sect believes that "the ends justify the means" and uses their enemies' organization and tactics against them. It acts outside the justice system of Ravens Bluff to eliminate magical threats. Little is known of this sect as its members hide their secrets even from themselves. Attempts at divination mysteriously fail.

A radical faction recently "made an example" of a spell caster and an unscrupulous magic dealer. Thanks to their wanton carelessness, The Keepers are now making extra effort to earn the trust and respect of Ravens Bluff. In particular, knights and squires are instructed to show respect for the Watch and deference to Clerical Circle representatives. It is also considered wise to tread lightly in the presence of followers of Tyr, especially knights of The Right Hand of Tyr. Furthermore, the order and the Knights' Council scrutinize lapses in conduct by their knights and squires.

Squiring to The Keepers of the Mystic Flame is more involved than other orders. The Keepers carefully screen each applicant for knowledge of spellcraft and religion, spoken and written common, faith in Mystra and/or her allies, and specific personality traits. A keen mind, a cool head, and the proven ability to act wisely in a variety of situations are necessary (Potential squires must be at least 7th level).

To squire to The Keepers of the Mystic Flame, send a SASE to Carl Buehler, 6 Hitching Rack Court, Durham NC 27713, attention: The Keepers.

Squire & Knight Responsibilities

- Protect the secrets of The Keepers. This is the first oath sworn. Breaking it can result in permanent death.
- Use magic wisely.
- Prevent evil or reckless use of magic.
- Promote a good image of The Keepers in Ravens Bluff. This was recently added to the public oath by Chester D'Marke, local Lord of Mystery (high priest of Mystra).
- Respect the laws and authorities of Ravens Bluff. This was also recently added to the public oath at the request of the Ravens Bluff Clerical Circle and by order of Chester D'Marke.

Additional Knight Responsibilities

- Carry your Octaris at all times.

An Octaris is a three-inch circular gray stone amulet inlaid with eight mithril stars equally spaced in a circle. The bottom star is enveloped by red stone inlay of a flame. It is a badge of recognition and a holy symbol for Mystra's priests or her allies.

- Guard your Thought Bottle at all costs.

This sacred item of Mystra contains knowledge too dangerous to remember. Protected by secret pass phrases, these bottles are secure until Mystra allows them to be opened.

Benefits

- A secure room with a bed provided by the temple of Mystra in Ravens Bluff.
- Free language: Spell Cant ((Int+Wis-2)/2), round up. This subtle sign language uses arcane spellcraft and religious knowledge to communicate metaphorically. It is used exclusively by The Keepers.
- If the knight is killed while on a mission for the order (Knight's Adventure), and at least a piece of the body is recovered, the order will make arrangements to have a *resurrection* cast on them at a 20% discount (half to be paid in magical items).
- The knight may write recommendations for a squire's admission into a knightly order.
- The knight qualifies for another knighthood with three fewer chivalry points than those who squire directly.
- The knight receives three Fame points upon acceptance. These may be divided among any appropriate categories.
- Keepers of the Mystic Flame may serve as a regular City Watch member but not in any special branch of the Watch.

Special Honors

Keeper decorations are special 2,000 gp gemstones that appear to contain a flame frozen within. Losing one of these is an immediate stain upon one's honor (-1 Chivalry Point). Selling or trading one results in immediate expulsion from the knighthood.

The Ruby

Awarded for defeating a being that posed a magical threat to the whole Realms.

The Emerald

Awarded for bringing to justice a being that posed a magical threat to Ravens Bluff.

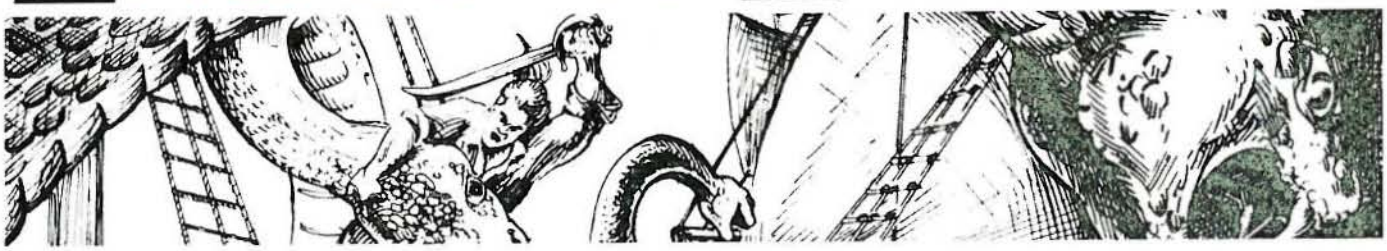
The Star Sapphire

Awarded for converting a powerful magical being to the worship of Mystra. This must be a true conversion, involving a voluntary alignment change and the loss of levels this requires.

The Pearl

Awarded for recovering a lost or stolen Thought Bottle.

MAGIC FOR MARINERS



by Gary S. Watkins

"Caravel off the port bow," came the cry from aloft, "and she's flying the purple dragon!"

Sinnel the Gray came abovedeck as soon as he heard the sighting. His young helmsman turned to him, looking positively ashen as he made his report.

"A Cormyrean Imperial, Cap'n. They've got us pinned to the coast. We'll never outrun 'er."

"Nonsense, lad," Sinnel replied with a crooked grin. "Do ye think I traded those fine black pearls to that Zhentarim seamage in Scar Harbor for an ornament? That lovely seahorse on the bow—the figgerhead—there's magic in 'er. We'll make it to Sembia long after they've lost our wake. And tonight in Yhaunn, ye can buy me an ale fer doubtin' yer captain."

The sea is an unforgiving mistress; pirates and privateers alike take any advantage they can. Many ships sport armaments or carry spellcasters in the crew. Others take the next step and add items of fell magic to their vessels. These items are quite rare, gold piece and experience values given here are suggestions only and may vary wildly. All game stats are derived from *Of Ships and the Sea*.

Figurehead of Speed

XP: 1500 GP Value: 12,500

This figurehead bears the likeness of a giant seahorse or hippocampus. The beast's great tail curls alongside its ship's hull while its noble head seems to strain forward, held by a chain bridle anchored to the prow. The few figureheads of this type seen thus far possess finely painted bodies of a bluish-green hue. The paint shimmers in the sunlight as though viewed from underwater with the light playing across it in reflective ripples.

This figurehead increases the movement rate of a ship by one-third and adds a +3 bonus to all maneuverability and pursuit die rolls. It may be used once per day for up to 8 hours.

Figurehead of Ramming

XP: 1000 GP Value: 10,000

This fearsome visage appears as a capricorn or sea-goat with a powerful fish tail and the upper torso of a massive goat. The tail extends to the water level when its vessel is empty, slightly deeper when carrying cargo. This has the effect of churning the water as if the capricorn were swimming with the ship in tow. With its head down in a charge, exposing tall, curved, ivory-colored horns, just the sight of a figurehead of ramming gives prudent captains reason to run.

It can be used once per day for 1 hour maximum. It adds 1 Ramming Factor to a ship and provides a +3 bonus to rolls on Table 24: Ramming Action Results.

Figurehead of Guidance

XP: 2000 GP Value: 20,000

A favorite among smugglers, the figurehead of guidance grants the ship's helmsman a mystic awareness of the local area's underwater topography to a depth of 100 feet. The ship can sail through fog, smoke, or darkness without penalty. Likewise, submerged rocks, sand bars, reefs, and other physical hazards can be avoided easily. Huge or gargantuan sized creatures may also be detected in this manner. Only rough silhouettes are discernible to the helmsman and even then only for large, dense objects and/or creatures. No sensory detail is gained. A figurehead of guidance most often resembles a dolphin or whale, gray and indistinct, arching forward from a cunningly carved driftwood wave affixed to the ship's prow. It can be activated twice per day up to four hours at a time.

Figurehead of Ferocity

XP: 2000 GP Value: 20,000

The figure of the sea lion inspires courage in its ship's crew and terror in its enemies. The figurehead appears like an actual sea lion with gleaming silver scales, claws, and teeth outstretched in attack. The enchanted sea lion can roar three times per day granting +3 to its crew's morale and +1 to hit and damage rolls. Enemies are penalized by the same amount. The effects of each roar last for three turns, but are never cumulative. During such times, huge, shimmering sea lion scales emerge on the ship's hull, and the crew recevies +1 to crew die rolls on Table 15: General Naval Combat.

Figurehead of the Serpent

XP: 1000 GP Value: 10,000

The magic of the sea snake figurehead can be called upon only once per week, with dramatic effect. When invoked, the carved serpent animates, as do several of the ship's oars, duplicating an *oars to snakes* spell at 15th level. Only the defensive version of the spell can be used. The figurehead itself is one of the most beautiful examples of the carver's art, with a long, sinewy, emerald green body rising up from the waves in winding curves. The head extends above the prow and curves back slightly as if poised to strike. The serpent's eyes are inlaid with sparkling black coral and would make a fine prize. However, anyone touching or tampering with the eyes causes the figurehead to animate and attack! The ship's oars do not animate in this instance nor does this triggered effect count against the item's usage limitation.

These items can greatly impact naval campaigns; use them sparingly to maintain balance and promote a sense of mystery and unease among players. ❑

strange Bedfellows

by Sean Reynolds

This adventure can be used if one of the player characters is the regent of Hogunmark or if the party is a group of nonregent scions or unblooded common folk. It is designed for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 1-3 or a regent of similar levels with a group of zero-level bodyguards. The adventure explores some of the political entanglements of Hogunmark, as well as its more remote regions and dangerous fauna.

Background Information

The two most aggressive domains in the Rjurik highlands are those of the White Witch and the Blood Skull Barony. Each constantly tests the strength of their neighbors' borders, looking for any weak point that they might use to their advantage. The domain of Hogunmark is in the unique position of being the only human-controlled domain that shares a border with both of these two evil neighbors.

Pressed by the priestly powers of the White Witch and increasing raids by the orog regent of the Barony, Hogunmark now must also contend with the mysterious wizard Darkon, who has been granted a province in the Barony (see The Rjurik Highlands sourcebook). Without any strong magic of its own, Hogunmark is vulnerable.

Fortunately, the White Witch and the Barony have their share of enemies. The Witch's magical sources are being tapped by a wizard named Ohlaak the Dragon; this man has also created a source holding in the Stjordvik province of Hjorvaal. Ohlaak's eventual plan is to battle the White Witch and take over her lands. In order to succeed, he needs to expand his network of sources and ley lines, and the ambitious wizard has noted that Hogunmark's Valkheim province abuts the White Witch's realm.

Adding a source holding to that province and linking it with his source in Hjorvaal would give him an extra font of mebhaighl—one that would be entirely outside of the Witch's domain, and thus outside of her ability to easily destroy it. Ohlaak would also benefit from this second line because Darkon, who controls most of the sources in the Blood Skull Barony, might detect the Dragon's ley line to Stjordvik and sunder it. Not wishing to make any more enemies at this time, Ohlaak sees that it is in his best interest to ask permission of the regent of Hogunmark before creating a source holding in Valkheim.

Ohlaak the Dragon
9th level Rjurik wizard
Strength: 12
Dexterity: 16
Constitution: 15
Intelligence: 16
Wisdom: 11
Charisma: 14
AL: CN
AC: 7 (ring & Dex)
hp: 35
THAC0: 18
Bloodline: Anduiras, minor, 20
Blood Abilities: Unreadable thoughts
Equipment: *ring of protection +1, dagger +2*

Ohlaak knows the realm spells *scry, inflame,* and *defection* (from Book of Magecraft)

Ohlaak appears to be a typical Rjurik man, standing nearly six feet tall, with broad shoulders, a thick build, and wild red hair. He normally wears rust-brown leggings and a brown vest over a gray jerkin. A side effect from his ring of protection is that his hair and the loose parts of his clothes always seem to be billowing as if he is standing in a brisk wind that only he could feel. He has a confident demeanor that doesn't imply arrogance or superiority.

An introduction to Hogunmark in the Birthright® campaign setting

Regent Introduction

At some point in the regent's day-to-day affairs in the capital city of Veikanger, he or she gets news that an unusual visitor has petitioned to speak with him or her. If the regent gives permission, the visitor (Ohlaak) will be escorted in, along with two young male attendants bearing a wooden chest between them. Ohlaak introduces himself as Ohlaak the Dragon, a wizard and enemy of the White Witch.

He goes on to explain that he, like most influential people in the Rjurik lands, is aware that Thrakkazz, orog regent of the Blood Skull Barony, has obtained the services of the wizard Darkon; the wizard is aiding the orog ruler with sorcery in exchange for regency of one of the orog's domains and access to the magical energy of the realm. Ohlaak says that unlike Darkon, he despises the orogs and also is a sworn foe of the evil priesess to the east. As far as Ohlaak knows, the magical sources in Hogunmark remain uncontested; any wizard could come along and snap them up.

The Rjurik wizard then offers a deal to the regent—in exchange for permission to tap into the mebhaighl of Valkheim, he will provide magical aid to the regent in times of need (inlcuding the use of his realm spells), as well as make a gift of the treasure he brought with him as a gesture of good faith. He also points out that his presence in Valkheim will make it more difficult for Darkon to extend his magical power into Hogunmark and, Ohlaak would be able to help defend the realm from invasions.

Aside formthese convincing arguments, Ohlaak's chest contains 2 GB worth of coins, furs, and other trade materials, including two beautiful daggers whose hilts are long carved pieces of whalebone. Ohlaak sees Hogunmark's position as an excellent opportunity, and will hold to whatever agreement is made. He would prefer to avoid commiting himself to casting more than four realms spells per year, and insists on being supplied the materials (GB and RP) for any realm spells the regent wished him to cast. Ohlaak wishes to remain a valuable independent ally of Hogunmark, rather than be treated as a court wizard at the beck and call of the regent.

If the regent agrees, Ohlaak would like to begin exploring Valkheim immediately, hiring mercenaries or adventurers to act as guards during the search. If the regent and his retinue wish to accompany the wizard on his search, Ohlaak agrees, as long as it is clear that the wizard will be relying on the protection of the regent's entourage.

Non-Regent Introduction

With this setup, Ohlaak has already gotten permission from the regent and is looking for brave people to act as his guards while he searches the province (the two attendants he had with him in the audience with the regent were local youths hired only for their strong backs). The most likely place to find adventurers in Hogunmark are Aaldvika (in Djaalfund) and Veikanger (in Gundviir), the two largest cities in the domain. If the encounter takes place in Veikanger, Ohlaak will have just met with the regent and will be quite excited at the successful bargain; as a result, he feels generous toward any potential employees.

The wizard checks all the typical establishments frequented by explorer-types—inns, bars, and weapon shops. He also will check with the local temples for any rangers familiar with or interested in the Valkheim area. He is willing to offer money, furs, rare dyes, and gems to prospective hires (up to approximately 300 gp worth of items to each employee).

He explains to interested parties that he is looking for a sign of the power of the land somewhere in the province of Valkheim. If necessary, he elaborates that this sign is a manifestation of the Rjurik god Erik. (Ohlaak, as reverent toward the god of his people as any other Rjurik person,

there have been an unusual number of wolves around in the past week, possibly due to the white witch's troops chasing them out of the neighboring province.

believes this to be true. Magic comes from nature, which comes from Erik). He avoids bringing up the fact that he is a wizard if at all possible.

On To Valkheim

Travel to the province of Valkheim will probably have to be on foot, as there is no well-traveled trail or road to that region. Ohlaak wants to stop in the western Valkheimian village of Eriksgaard to resupply, and encounters along the way are normal animals common to the region (moose, elk, bears, foxes, hares, and other types, typically inclined to run away if discovered).

The village is rather small and its inhabitants are more interested in barter for useful goods than actual coin. They seek non-food items and appropriate clothing for the weather.

The villagers report that there have been an unusual number of wolves around in the past week, possibly due to the White Witch's troops chasing them out of the neighboring province of Solung Bank. Some of these wolves have even tried to attack humans, although they quickly flee when the fight turns against them.

Looking For The Source

Ohlaak wants to spend a day in the village to attune himself to the land, using a secret spell of his own devising. He will be prepared to move the next morning, relying on his wizard's sense for mebhaighl to lead him to the source for this domain.

Initially, his senses lead the group to the southwest. Note that while the wizard's senses are giving the general course, he relies upon the more woodsy characters in the group to choose the best path around foliage and other natural hazards.

The first night after leaving Eriksgaard, the sounds of howling wolves reach the party. There is a 30% chance that 2-5 wolves actually approach during the night. If the wolves smell significant amounts of meat with the party, they attempt to sneak into camp and steal it, running away if threatened.

The second day after the village, the party turns eastward, following the northern edge of the hilly area of the province. Sounds and tracks of wolves will be much more prevalent, and there is a 50% chance during the day that wolves will be spotted following the group from a safe distance away in the trees.

That evening, 2-12 wolves attack the camp for 5 rounds, leaving at the end of that time. Ohlaak only attacks the wolves if he is directly threatened—he considers the adventurers (or the regent's guards, as appropriate) to be his protectors, and it is likely that the party doesn't know that he is anything other than some sort of pilgrim (possibly one with the doom of second sight). Howls continue throughout the night.

The Sources

The third day after Eriksgaard, Ohlaak turns the group more northward. As before, the presence of wolves is very obvious, and occasionally wolves cross the group's path. About mid-day, they discover an especially thick group of trees. Ohlakk becomes animated by this, and urges the group into the cluster of old growth.

Inside the broad oval of the trees is a small clearing. In the clearing are a tiny pool of crystal-clear water, a large gnarled stone jutting up from the ground, and a sturdy, broad ancient pine tree. This is the manifestation of the source in this province.

The wizard approaches cautiously and verifies the source's presence with his magical senses. Once he has done so, he announces to the group that this is what he sought. He now seems to enter a trance to attune himself to the

the wolf is a terrible sight—blood and gore run from its right eye socket where the broken-off shaft of an arrow is still visible.

power of this place (note that this is not entirely unusual; driuds, rangers, and other especially sensitive people might very well feel inclined to do the same).

Ohlaak enters a trance and does not emerge for at least an hour unless he is violently disturbed. He is laying the premilinary foundations for creating a source holding, as well as memorizing the magical "signature" of the area so that he may easily find it via his scry or teleport spells.

It is during this waiting period that the source of the wolf attacks becomes known. A winter wolf was shot by a ranger almost two weeks ago; the woodsman's arrow barely pierced the creature's brain. Suffering from the severe trauma, it has since been chasing and herding the local wolves into harrying and attacking the human denizens of the land. Out of fear, the normal wolves have been obeying, but after a short time their instinctive avoidance of hostilities with man take over, and they flee. However, this time the humans have moved far enough into the wolf's territory that it attacks in person, driving the lesser wolves into the fray before it.

Final Conflict

The winter wolf chases 2-12 normal wolves into the clearing and then enters the fight, leading with its icy breath. The wolf is a terrible sight—blood and gore run from its right eye socket where the broken-off shaft of an arrow is still visible. In its current state, it will not flee and need not check morale. The lesser wolves will follow it for at least 5 rounds, and then flee if they fail a morale check. Furthermore, they automatically turn and flee if the dire wolf is killed.

Ohlaak does not come out of his trance unless he is shaken or takes damage. If distracted from his meditations, he takes one round to focus himself and then attempts to drive away the attackers, starting with the winter wolf, which he sees as the greatest threat. However, if the animals are defeated before he finishes his meditation, he is quite suprised at any bodies left from the struggle. If described to him, he praises their valor and increases their payment by an extra 100 gp worth of coins or trade items (or increase the regent's reward by 500 gp worth of items).

Conclusion

Once the wizard has made his preparations, he will want to be escorted back to the city. Villagers in the town of Eriksgaard will be glad to hear that the wolves should return to their normal selves.

Once in the city, the wizard thanks those who assisted him, pays them (if necessary), and makes arrangements to return to his hidden home. Hogunmark now has a new ally, and a much better chance at surviving the predations of its neighbors.

Wrap-up

Each character should receive 200 xp for completing this adventure; role-playing awards should range from 50-150 xp, as appropriate. Attempting to harm the source manifestation should result in an xp penalty of 200 points.

Note that it is quite possible to run this adventure as a means to stop Ohlaak, should the regent refuse to accept his deal. The wizard will probably decide to proceed with his plan anyway. In this case, if the regent is an NPC, he or she will command the character sto bring him bakc laive for questioning. Then, the characters must track him down and save him from the dire wolf who will naturally attack when Ohlaak is in his focusing trance.

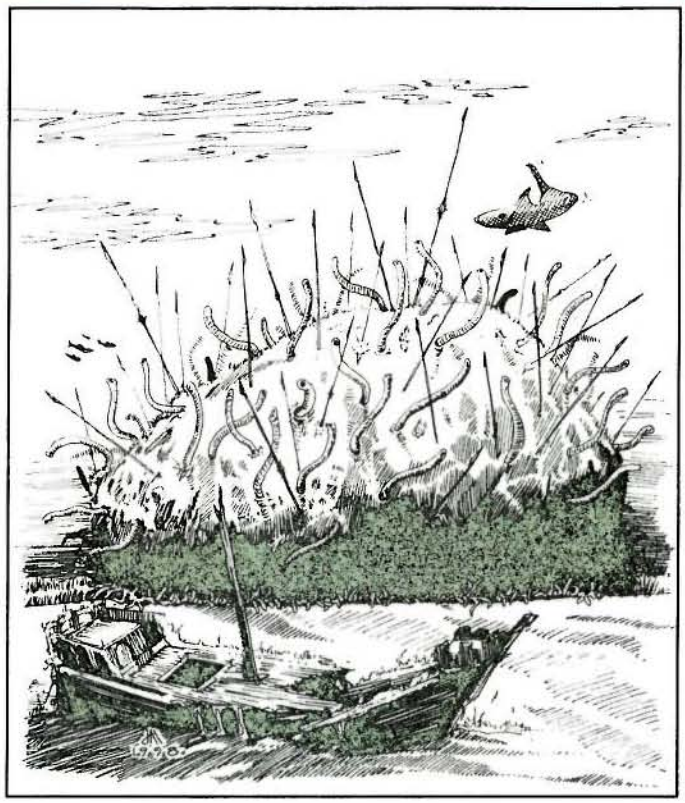
❑

Crustaid

by Jeremy Reinhard

Climate/Terrain:Bodies Of Water Around Evermeet
Frequency: Very Rare
Organization: Pack / Solitary
Activity Cycle: Hibernation
Diet: See Below
Intelligence: Animal (1)
Treasure: E (see below)
Alignment: N

No. Appearing: 1-3 or ~20
Armor Class: -5, 3, or 7
Movement: 1 (crawl) or special
Hit Dice: 10
THAC0: 10
No. of Attacks: 2d4
Damage/Attack: 2-12
Special Attacks: See Below
Special Defenses: See Below
Magic Resistance: Nil
Size: G (30-50 ft.)
Morale: 20 (it can't run away)
XP VALUE: 4500



Combat: A crustaid spends most of its time in deep slumber. It only wakes when something catches its eye, is attacked, or the Queen of Elves, Queen Amlaruil Moonflower, commands it. When a crustaid "sees" a creature above it, it spurts long tentacles from within its tube projections. Unlike an octopus's suction cup tentacles, the crustaid's tentacles have sharp hooks. These tentacles move with lightning speed. If it spots an object on the surface, it will strike one round later per half mile of depth. Roll 2d4 to determine how many tentacles strike per round. This number is added to what has already struck. Soon after the crustaid attacks, Queen Amlauril gives the crustaid a command to release or to destroy. Once the creature receives the command to destroy, it crushes the object with its tentacles. The total number of tentacles a crustaid has is equal to its size (in feet) divided by 2. For example, a 40' crustaid would have 20 tentacles to attack with, and would attack for at least three rounds. The rules of constriction for a crustaid are exactly like those of a Giant Squid, with the following exceptions: a crustaid usually won't bother attacking anything smaller than a whole ship, and not only must something hit the tentacle (AC 7) but 6 points should be subtracted each single hit Another example: A fighter hits the tentacle of a crustaid twice in one round. The first hit causes 9 points of damage and the second 4 points. The tentacle only takes 3 points of damage. This is due to the extremely thick skin of the crustaid's tentacles. This may be negated because of particular magical items (sword of sharpness).

Right after the attack, the crustaid begins to pull its body towards its tentacles. It pulls itself upward at the same rate as its tentacles shoot upward (see above). Because the crustaid has a lot of weight, smaller ships (60' or less) will not have the dismay of seeing several dozen rock-spears shooting through the bottom of their boat on the surface. Instead they will be dragged underwater to suffer the same fate. For those lucky larger ships, the crustaid pulls itself up, extending its anchor below it. This is the only time when that member of the crustaid is exposed. Once the crustaid crashes into the object (no roll to hit is required), it will drag it under and stubbornly refuse to let go of its future meal.

A crustaid rarely attacks man-sized or smaller creatures unless it is awake and hungry, attacked,or Queen Amlaruil commands it. In case anyone is unlucky enough to have this happen to them, use the same rules given under Giant Squids for attacking with the previous exceptions and use the rules for fighting without light for the crustaid (it is effectively blind for such close, small creatures). The crustaid still tries to impale any creature it is crushing on its spears.

Habitat/Society: Crustaids are only known to exist around the deep recesses of ocean around the Elven Isle of Evermeet. They are physically connected to the ocean floor through an "anchor" member of the body extending several hundred feet into the earth. Where this ends it looks like an upside-down umbrella. This makes crustaids extremely hard to move. The anchor has an AC of 3 and 1/4 of the creature's total hit points (this is in addition to the creature's total hit points). The only conceivable way of moving a crustaid is to catch it while it is moving itself, (which it probably only attempts when commanded by Queen Amlaruil) when it will have drawn its anchor inside itself. Mov-

ing it still will be a feat considering the crustaid's size and weight.

The main body of a crustaid looks like a large lump of rock and coral with long, hollow, tubes (5'-8') and even longer spears (10'-15') protruding from it, pointing towards the surface. The underside of a crustaid is much like an alligator's, with thousands of large, centipede-like, feet extending from each separation In the thick, leather plates.

In the center is a slit in the plates without any protruding feet; this is the Crustaid's mouth. It feeds much like a starfish, with its stomach coming out of its body and engulfing whatever it is over. This is usually wreckage from ships (wood, and drowned crew mostly). A crustaid cannot digest metal or stones, which means there is usually a pile of nails, gems, and such that are used to build ships, along with several king's ransoms in the area surrounding.

When determining the treasure type of a creature like this, consider the following factors: frequency of ships passing through the area, number of other crustaids, how close Sea Elves live (who would find more than enough reason to take any treasure lying around.), and other such factors. If the DM decides, they may award up to 10 times whatever is determined to be in the area. This treasure will be spread out over a wide area. Reroll or ignore any potions, scrolls, or such (the crustaid would have eaten these).

Ecology: Crustaids, for the most part, live in the main ocean currents around Evermeet or the area near the tributary of the River Shaelyn. They seem to be placed in the most likely travel paths of ships, far away from the lairs of the other defenders of Evermeet. The last thing the elves want is to have their defenders fighting amongst themselves. The crustaids usually live between half a mile to a little under two miles deep. After that their "sight" becomes obscured.

A crustaid's vision is based on motion and light. The crustaid's outer shell has many "sensors", which are as hard as the rest of the shell. These sensors can detect objects moving on or below the water for up to 2 miles, even at night. Although a crustaid has incredible range, an object must be moving at a rate greater than 1 to be noticeable.

Crustaids are newly discovered (or newly rumored) in terms of the popular majority, but sea-faring elves, and sea elves have long known about them. Reproduction and other facts about a crustaid anatomy remains a mystery.

CONTEST TIME!

A bunch of TSR and Five Rings people were sitting around narfing on teriyaki one day. Perhaps the wisdom of the Orient came upon us as we asked ourselves, "What has all this role-playing nonsense taught us? What do we carry away from it into our lives? How have we enriched ourselves from the experience?"

Thus, along the lines of Robert Fulghum's nauseatingly overspoofed essay, we summed up the question in a trite parody called,

Everything I Really Need to Know I Learned From AD&D

Tell us what lifelong nuggets of wisdom you've gleaned from your time spent playing AD&D.

Some of the answers we came up with include:

- Charisma is meaningless.
- If you need a job, just hang out in a bar.
- In a fight, take out the weak-looking guy with no weapons first.

Send in your nuggets o' wisdom! We'll print the best ones in a couple of issues!

An unusually thorough introduction to knot-tying we just had to call:

TYING ONE ON

by Spike Y Jones

(with help and Zeppelin Knot diagrams from my father)

When you think of sailing, you see tall ships, sails a-billow, and banks of cannons. When you think of *sailors*, you see grizzled men tying elaborate knots. Unlike some stereotypes, this one is valid. But why the obsession with Sheepshanks, Clove Hitches, and Turk's-Heads?

An Obsession With Knots

There were four reasons. First, big ships had literally *miles* of lines, sheets, shrouds, yards, and hawsers and something had to keep it from flopping around. ("Rope" is a raw material; once it's put to use, it becomes a "line" and is given a specific name for its new function. Thus, a sailor is a rookie until he "learns the ropes.")

Second, if a piece of equipment, from a pocket-knife to a barrel of biscuits, got loose on a rolling deck it could be a hazard to sailors, or it could fall overboard with no hope of retrieval. So securing gear was an obsession on shipboard.

Third, while anyone could create a new knot by making a few twists and turns in a piece of rope, a good sailor's knot had to function three different ways. It had to be secure, it had to come together easily without jamming, and you had to be able to untie it in the dark, in the rain, and in a hurry. Every sailor learns to tie his knots in the standard way, as some other sailor might have to release one in a hurry or in the dark. Centuries of experimentation went into finding knots that served a variety of functions and fit all three of those criteria.

Fourth, a voyage during the Age of Sail could last months. Barring life-threatening storms and pirate attacks, the time was consummately boring; a sailor needed a pastime that could be performed using only the limited resources found around him.

Not only did sailors have to know a basic repertoire of useful knots, but they sought out less common knots. Some knots served limited uses and some were merely decorative. And since most sailors were illiterate, knot descriptions weren't recorded. They only learned new knots firsthand, often from someone who would only part with the secret of one knot if you could teach him another one.

So What?

For roleplaying games, there are two reasons why a gamer would want to know about such an arcane topic. First, the following knots can be useful in real life, even if you never go to sea. Second, a GM running a shipboard or dockside adventure can add a good deal of atmosphere if he can drop terms like "Standing Bowline", "Halyard Bend", and "Buntline Hitch" into the dialogue. If the GM can actually *tie* a few knots absentmindedly while playing the ancient ship's-chandler selling the PCs a used treasure map, the believability of the scene increases immeasurably. Following are descriptions and diagrams of some of the most common and useful knots, some you may use without even knowing it. Knots have been grouped according to loose "families" which tie similarly or serve related puposes. To learn these, read slowly and do them as you go. [*ed note: I unlaced one of my shoes to try all these out!*]

Half Knot, Bowknot, Shoe Clerk's Knot, Granny Knot & Reef Knot

The knot most people are familiar with is the Bowknot they use to tie their shoes. It consists of two Half Knots, the second tied with loops instead of the string ends.

If you tie the loops in a third Half Knot, you've made a Shoe Clerk's Knot (also known as a Nanny Knot). This is used to take up excess string in long shoelaces and prevents children from undoing their laces.

If the loops of a Bowknot are replaced with a second Half Knot, or if the ends of the loops get pulled through the knot, a Granny Knot is formed (used for tying packages or "knotting" shoelaces).

A Reef Knot (or Square Knot) is a Granny Knot with a trivial difference that makes it significantly less likely to slip under strain; instead of two *identical*

"With old sailors it was, and is, a matter of pride to be able to make knots, the more difficult and obscure the better." —**Albert R. Wetjen, Fiddler's Green**

diagrams pg. 24-27 from **The Ashley Book of Knots** *by Clifford W. Ashley copyright 1944, Doubleday & Company, with the exception of the Zeppelin Knot.*

Half Knots, the second Half Knot is tied in the opposite direction (left-over-right instead of right-over-left or vice-versa). The most common shipboard use of this knot is to reef sails, that is, to temporarily tie up part of a sail to reduce its surface area during violent weather.

These knots are common because they're so easy to tie, and they're components of many more complicated knots. The ease of accidentally *untying* them makes them unsuitable for critical nautical uses. Thus, other knots serve other specific purposes.

Sheepshank

This odd-looking knot, sometimes compared to a leg of lamb, is designed to shorten a length of rope without cutting it or strengthen a weak spot in a rope.

The rope is tripled over on itself with the weak spot, if any, at the "X"; (see diagram 1), and then a Half Hitch (a simple closed twist loop, like a cursive letter "e") is formed on the two outside lines, which the ends of the two internal loops are placed through. When loose, this knot is always ready to fall apart, but when taut it's remarkably strong, so strong that the rope can be cut at the "X" without the knot coming undone under steady tension, a trick used in magic acts.

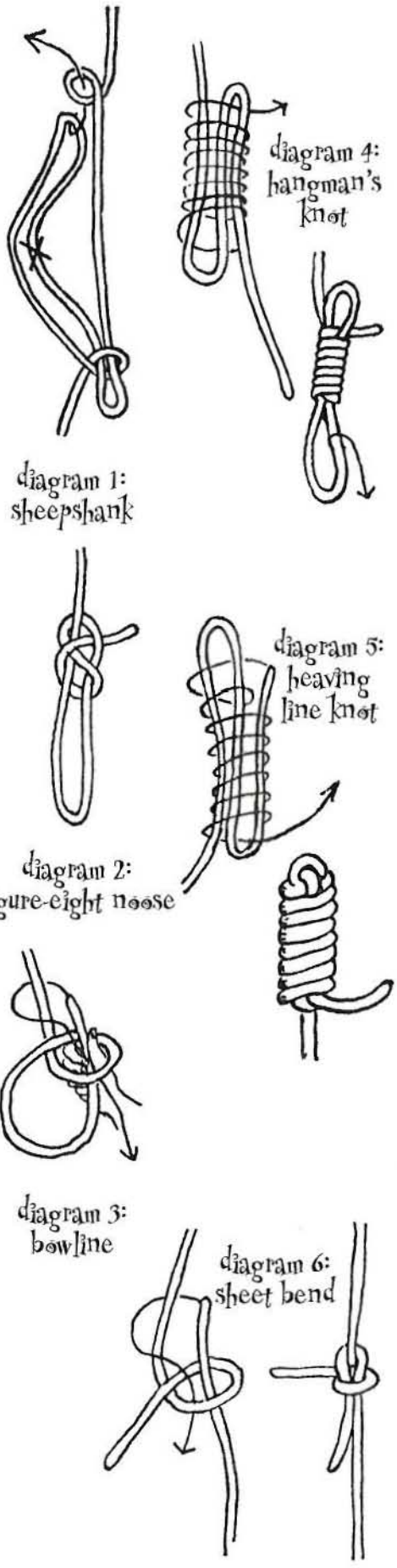
Figure-Eight Noose, Bowline Knot, Running Bowline Knot, Hangman's Knot & Heaving Line Knot

The best noose knot to use when making a snare on land (because of how smoothly it tightens up) is the Figure-Eight Noose. (See diagram 2.)

On shipboard the Bowline Knot (or simply, the Bowline, pronounced "bolin") is called the King of Knots and is the most frequently used and practiced loop knot.

It's quite common on land too. Generations of children have learned the story of a rabbit coming out of its hole, running around a tree, and then clambering back through the hole (See diagram 3) to remember this knot.

The easiest noose knot for a sailor to remember is a Running Bowline Knot; a noose made by running the long end of the rope through the Bowline loop.



The landlubber's Hangman's Knot begins much like a Sheepshank. The rope is tripled over on itself and the loose end is wrapped around the other two lines the desired number of times (8, 9, or 13 are traditional) before being tucked through the small loop at the top. (See diagram 4.) Many individual prisons and executioners have their own favorite variant noose knot, but this is the most familiar.

Like Hangman's Nooses, Heaving Line Knots are highly individual. A simple one can be made by tying a Hangman's Knot with two differences: before making the first turn around the other two lines, pass the loose end through the loop they make, and then put the first turn around only those two lines, passing between the loose line and the other two. (See diagram 5.) It's a little tricky to describe, so try it with the diagram to get it right.

Sheet Bend

To quickly tie two ropes together, use a *bend*. The simplest bend is a Sheet Bend, used in the rigging that adjusts the position (trim) of a sail. A Sheet Bend looks almost identical to a Reef Knot with one difference. Unlike a Sheet Bend, a Reef Knot can slip along the rope when loose or when the two pieces of rope are of different smoothnesses. (See diagram 6.) A Reef Knot will hold more tightly even with loose rope.

Two Bowlines tied with their loops intersecting is a more secure (although time consuming) way to link two lines than a Sheet Bend; the next step in security is to spend hours splicing the lines together strand by strand.

Half Hitch, Midshipman's Hitch, Clove Hitch & Fisherman's Litter

The quickest and easiest way to fix a line to any roughly cylindrical piece of a ship (spar, boom, or railing) is a Hitch. Although not the most secure knot, as long as the sailor knows its shortcomings and only uses it where warranted, Hitches work nicely.

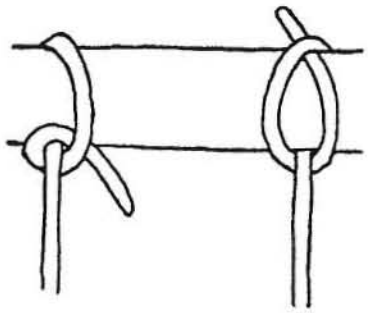


diagram 7:
half hitch

The most basic Hitch is the Half Hitch. You can make one with a single turn around the rail with the end of the rope tucked under itself. In diagram #7, the left-hand Half Hitch is dangerously insecure. But by adjusting it so that the weight pulling on the rope holds the end snug against the rail (as in the right-hand picture) it's safe as long as the pull is constant. If the rope ever goes slack, there's no guarantee that the end won't come loose. For this reason, a Half Hitch is usually only put to temporary use.

The knot that demonstrates why sailors practice rope-work quickly, without looking, is the Midshipman's Hitch.

This starts with a Half Hitch, but the end of the rope is turned around the long end of the line a second time before being drawn tight. The user can then hold the short end of the line secure or put a second Half Hitch into it. The most important thing about the Midshipman's Hitch is the equipment it's tied to. You use it to tie the rescue line around your waist, seat, leg, or chest after falling overboard.

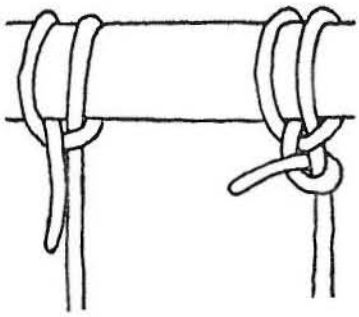


diagram 8:
clove hitch

The Clove Hitch is more secure than a Half Hitch, is tied almost as quickly, and can be made even safer by Half-Hitching it to itself below the knot. (See diagram 8.) It's not an oft-used shipboard knot because there are more secure knots for every thing you'd use a Clove Hitch for. But, it's often a handy knot to tie lines to posts or tent stakes on shore.

Although not well known, the Fisherman's Litter is of obvious use to adventurers. A makeshift stretcher can be created in seconds by running two poles (oars, boat hooks, etc.) through a coil of rope and securing each end with a Clove Hitch (Half-Hitched to itself). (See diagram 9.) While the standard climbing rope many dungeoneers carry is strong enough for this use, some of the most obvious poles (javelins or spears meant for throwing, 10-foot poles used for probing for trap doors, etc.) are less than trustworthy when used this way. If stout poles (such as the shafts of polearms used for swinging instead of thrusting) aren't available, two or more weak poles can be Hitched together.

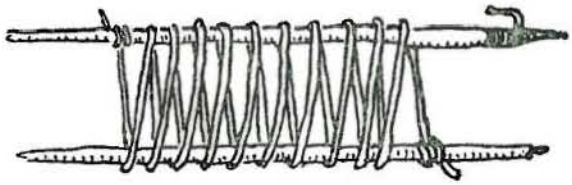


diagram 9:
fisherman's litter

This also demonstrates why sailors take care to properly coil ropes they're not using. Not only does it keep them out of the way on crowded decks, but it ensures that they'll be snarl-free if they're needed on the spur of the moment.

Figure-Eight Knot, Zepplin Knot

A stopper knot prevents the end of a line from being pulled through some hole, whether it's a drawstring in a pair of sweatpants, a rope going through a block (part of a block and tackle pulley), or a Half Hitch. The most common temporary stopper knot on shipboard is the Figure-Eight Knot (see diagram 10).

Many practical knots have been used for hundreds or even thousands of years,

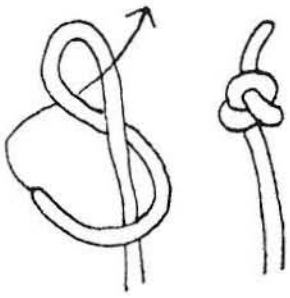


diagram 10:
figure-eight knot

while others are much more recent. The Zeppelin Knot was developed in Germany in the 1920s and produces a slightly larger "knob" than a Figure-Eight Knot, thus making it less likely to run through a block. Larger stopper knots can be created to make even larger knobs, but are less simple (and thus less easy to learn and remember) than the Zeppelin Knot (see diagram 11). The Zeppelin Knot is currently used more by modern sailors than airship crews, but probalby only because we have more ships than zeppelins currently.

Turk's-Head Knot, Starter Rope & Cat-O'-Nine-Tails

An entire class of complicated knots is named for their imagined similarity in appearance to the head of a man wearing a turban. They have a number of uses ranging from footholds on climbing ropes to drip guards on canoe paddles, as well as making decorative sea-chest handles, hatbands, key fobs, and napkin

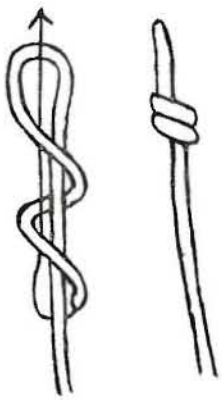


diagram 11:
zeppelin knot

rings. While Turk's-Heads *could* be used as stoppers, they aren't often used in that way because they're permanent knots. Untying one with anything but a knife takes time, patience, and strength. Still, decorative knotting of this sort was taken as an example of the skill of the crew and the smartness of a vessel, so they were much more common than might otherwise be warranted.

The Running (or Common) Turk's-Head Knot illustrated here (see diagram 12) is technically a Four-Bight, Three-Lead Turk's-Head (based on the number of loops and how many times the rope crosses itself at certain points), but Turk's-Heads can be made with almost infinite complexity. The dotted line in the diagram shows an optional continuation to this knot; instead of ending with the solid line, follow the dotted line to repeat the knot, only ending with the solid line when you've doubled the knot.

The majority of knots in this article come together easily when you pull on one or both of their ends, and come apart just as easily when an end is loosened. Complex knots such as Turk's-Heads require a second step after the knot is made: *working* the knot. After weaving the rope into position according to the diagram, if you just pull on its ends, you get an unsightly mess of loose loops and snagged crossings. To make it symmetrical and tight, ease the slack through the knot loop by loop. More complex Turk's Heads sometimes require tools such as needles, marlingspikes, and pliers.

Two particularly interesting uses of Turk's-Heads were in the creation of Starter Ropes and Cats-o'-Nine-Tails. The Cat was made by either untwisting a multi-strand rope or splicing a number of cords onto the end of a thick rope handle about 18" long.

The handle was traditionally made with a Turk's-Head at each end and in the middle to prevent the rope from unravelling, and it was then often wrapped in cloth.

The ends of the strands were knotted to prevent the cords from fraying. Contrary to popular opinion, the cords weren't barbed. A properly tied and used Cat did enough damage without artificial additives, especially if the

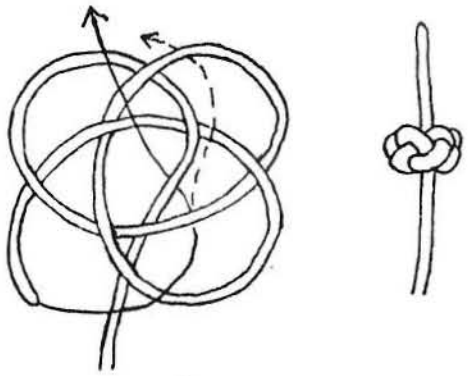


diagram 12:
running turk's head knot

victim was subjected to a flogging around the fleet (where he'd be transported from ship to ship, whipped repeatedly with a new Cat each time).

A Starter Rope looked like the handle of a Cat-o'-Nine-Tails, and was carried by petty officers to be used across the back or buttocks of slow-moving sailors to encourage them. Unlike a Cat, a Starter Rope wasn't permanently damaging.

Belaying Pins

As a kid, one thing that puzzled me about pirate movies was that ships were equipped with racks of emergency weapons. The puzzling part was that the weapon racks were often stored in some pretty inconvenient places (like 30 feet above the deck in the ratlines; see diagram 13) and that the weapon of choice was an ineffective little club instead of a cutlass or at least a full-sized baseball bat.

It turned out that the clubs were called belaying pins, and they were only makeshift weapons. Their real purpose was things for knots to be tied to, and as storage devices for unused rope coils.

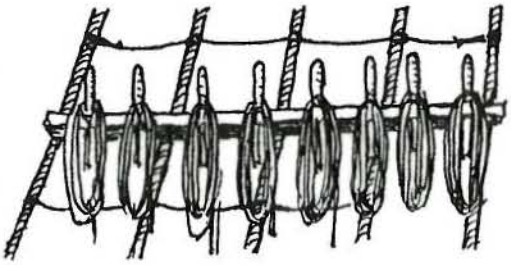


diagram 13:
belaying pins

To belay a rope, you first make a circular turn around the bottom and then the top of the pin (see diagram 14), and then continue with a few figure-eight turns. Finally, you "make fast" the belayed line by putting a single Hitch into it, tucking the end under the last belayed loop. You then coil any excess line and hang it over the pin.

To "cast off" a belayed line, you either reverse the belaying procedure (if the line is under tension), or simply remove the pin (if the line is slack).

Finally, I'll leave you with a bit of nautical lingo. Despite the wording in this article, mariners rarely *tie* knots in ropes. Techincally, sailors "make fast" or "take" Hitches, "bend" ropes together, "put" knots or splices into single lines, "belay" lines to devices like cleats and pins, "clap on" Stopper knots, and

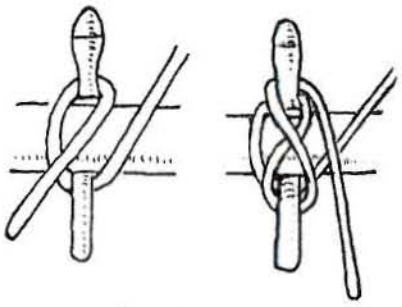


diagram 14:
belaying a rope

"work" Turk's-Heads. The only time a sailor truly *ties* a knot is when he ties-up a ship to a wharf at the end of a journey.

Bibliography

The most useful book in producing this article was *The Ashley Book of Knots* by Clifford W. Ashley. While it may seem out-of-date (1944, Doubleday & Company), it's a standard in the field and most library systems have at least one copy.

A more recent guide to basic knots is *The Klutz Book of Knots* by John Cassidy (1985, Klutz Press). While it only deals with a few basic knots, it features one extra: a cord attached to the book so you can practice your knots while you read.

Strongwind

Rumors of a ghost ship abound on the docks.

a sea-going adventure for characters 3rd to 5th level

by Glen R. Goodwin & Doug Smith

Editors Note: This adventure was originally set in Ravens Bluff, a port city on the Sea of Fallen Stars in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® *setting. Most specific place names have been cut out so that a DM can easily put this adventure into his or her own campaign.*

DM Background

In ancient times the legendary Captain Pohl "the Undertaker" Strongwind roamed the Sea of Falling Stars. Many vicious raids have been attributed to this infamous cutthroat, and much blood has run at his hand.

Legend tells of a foe that not even Captain Strongwind could escape—one dark and dismal night, with fog thick as coagulating blood, the captain and his ship, also called *Strongwind*, disappeared off the face of Faerûn. That was over a hundred years ago, and neither the ship, its captain, nor its treasure has been seen. To date, it is only legend, a tale for school children and would-be pirates. It was only a tale until now.

Strongwind is back to wreak its bloody havoc upon new victims. Rumors fly on the docks of this ghost ship and its undead captain, Captain Strongwind, returning after centuries of sleep to plunder the ancestors of his original victims.

Player Introduction

The sun is high, and a fresh ocean breeze wafts through the tavern in which you are enjoying a fine mug of drink. A recently delivered message sits in your midst, and you contemplate whether or not to reply. The message reads:

Brave adventurers,

Your names have been hailed by the local constabulary, and I know that your chests are heavy with the medals won in service. With such bravery I am sure that you are just the band that I seek. I hereby beseech you to join me at noon this day to discuss the possibility of employment. I can assure you the pay will be well.

My fondest regards,

Harbormaster Calvin Longbottle

The appointment is for noon this day, and it is now 11 AM. If the PCs make general inquiries as to what Calvin Longbottle could possibly want (with any NPC in the tavern or any of their possible contacts within the city) they may find:

- Trade across the Sea of Fallen Stars has diminished considerably in recent weeks. Rumors abound of pirates.

- Sailors in the taverns have been muttering about a ghost ship,supposedly sailing across the Dragon Reach. Some say it is the Strongwind.

- *Strongwind* was a pirate ship of times long past. No one knows what became of the ship or its captain, Pohl "the Undertaker" Strongwind.

Encounter One: Harbormaster

Calvin Longbottle is a moderately cheerful, honest and dedicated man. He despises pirates and the Merchant Guild (as they are mostly rich pirates from decades ago). His intention is to hire the PCs as agents to discover the problems ravaging beyond the harbor.

You arrive at Calvin Longbottle's office where a somewhat flustered clerk tells you to wait before disappearing behind a closed door. The room about you is a relaxed and subdued environment with a good view of the harbor

and decorated with a sublime nautical theme. After several minutes, the distraught clerk ushers you into Calvin Longbottle's office. As you enter, a robust man dressed in the manner of a seaman clambers to his feet from behind an over-loaded desk.

This man is the harbormaster, Calvin Longbottle. He briefly discusses the situation as follows:

• Sea trade has all but dried up lately.

• Reports returning to the harbor tell of a ghost ship that is raiding all sea trade on the Sea of Falling Stars. Three expeditions to find the ship have since disappeared.

• Longbottle adamantly refuses to believe that it is the result of a ghost ship. Instead he chooses to believe that it is "some ruse of the Merchant's Guild, or the pirate bands the plague our good waters."

• If the name *Strongwind* is mentioned, Longbottle gruffly dismisses the idea as "Child tales not worth the salt you spit."

• Longbottle offers each PC 200 gold pieces if they successfully perform this mission. PCs can haggle with the harbormaster, and may receive as much as 400 gold total. Calvin cannot go higher than that price.

• Because of a recent crisis, Longbottle has no ships to lend to the party. However, he will give them 100 gold pieces to hire a non-commissioned ship out of the harbor.

If the PCs say yes, they should be on their way immediately. The harbormaster has no further information at this time.

Encounter Two: Hiring A Ship

Before the adventure can begin, the PCs must hire a ship. They must scout around the docks to find any of the three captains detailed below. This information can be obtained by questioning dock workers and sailors.

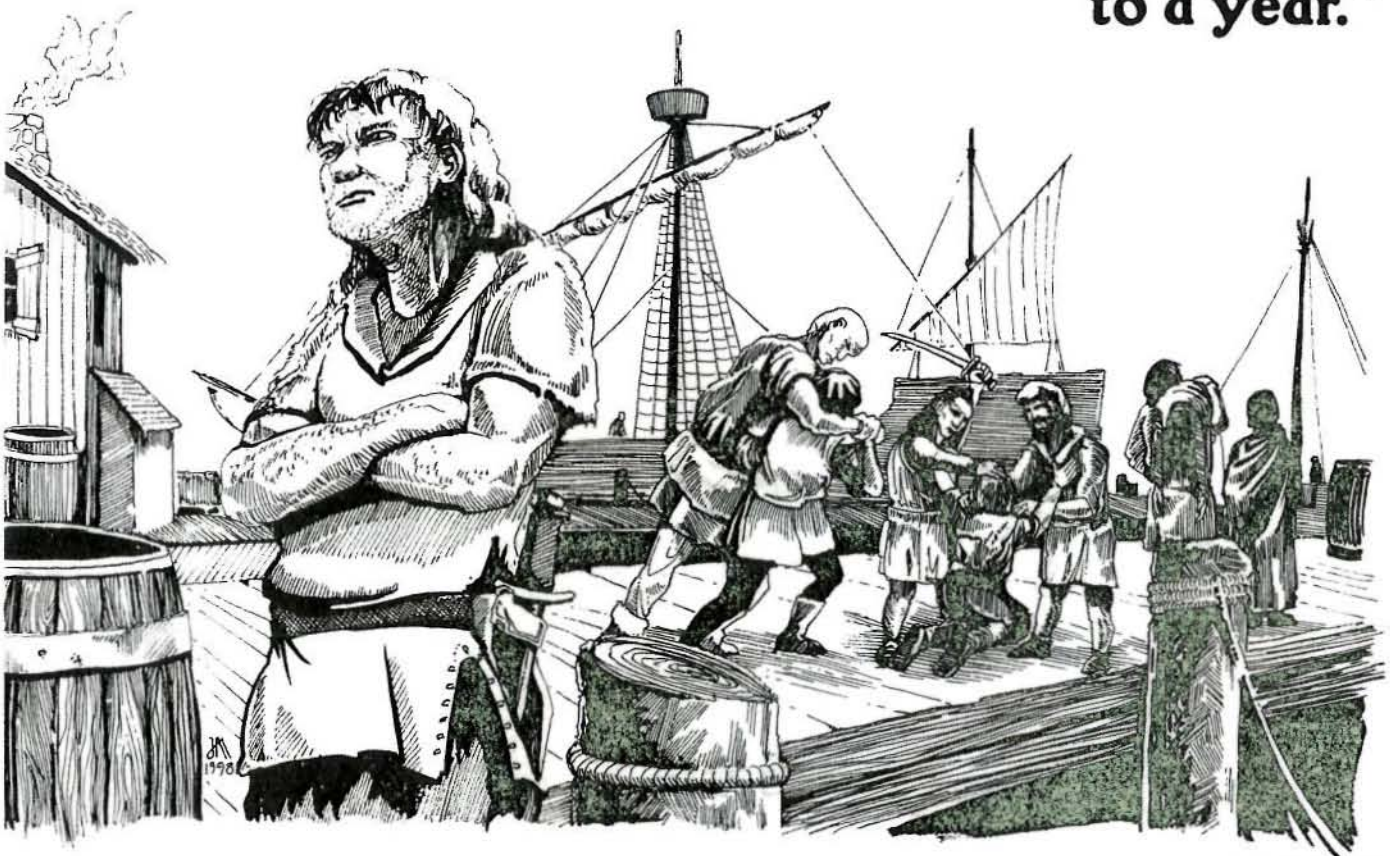
Longbottle states that due to the possible danger of this mission, civilians should not be present on the ship, thus the PCs must book passage on the ship for themselves only.

CAPTAIN #1: Captain Jolly Roger
Roger is a grungy, but strict man. He is friendly to the PCs, and swaps a joke or two before getting down to business. He would normally love to book the PCs for "Some wild adventuring type of stuff" but unfortunately his ship is booked. However, if the PCs is willing to buy up all of the seats on the ship, he would gladly lend them his services. Buying up all the seats costs 200 gold pieces. Roger has the most impressive of the three ships, a three masted rig called *Lolli*.

Before the PCs can rent the ship, however, they must get permission from Roger's boss, the merchant Steven Goldstein of Goldstein's Zakharan Imports.

Captain Roger: Int Average; AL LN; AC 5; MV 12; F5; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1 by scimitar + Str; SZ M; ML 14.
Roger's Crew (20): Int Average; AL LN; AC 7; MV 12; F2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 by short sword; SZ M; ML 13.

'Press Gangs kidnap likely victims and throw them on a boat as deck hands for six months to a year."



CAPTAIN #2: Captain "Poopdeck" Pete
Pete is an excessively portly fellow with a surly attitude and tuna breath. He comes across as aloof, but at the mention of food he is more then willing to talk.

His ship is the *Blitterox*, "...the fastest thing to ever hit the seven, no eight? six? Whatever, seas." Captain Pete is a coward when it comes to pirates, and he has heard the stories as of late. It will cost the PCs 175 gold pieces to hire his boat.

Before they can rent the ship, however, they must get permission from Pete's boss, Rusty, of Rusty's Suds.

Captain Pete: Int Average; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; F4; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 by scimitar; SZ M; ML 13.
Pete's Crew (20): Int Average; AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 by short sword; SZ M; ML 11.

CAPTAIN #3: Captain Charles "Bonerack" Withers
Bonerack is a tall, haggard-looking old man with long grey sideburns and a receding hairline. He is bent over and leans heavily upon his staff. When he speaks, the noxious smell of death saturates the air. His speech is a harsh guttural sailor slang, and extremely difficult to understand.

Bonerack's ship, the *Marrow*, is available for the PCs, but he and his crew refuse to fight in any battles unless his ship is threatened—and even then will flee from battle first. Bonerack's fee is 100 gold pieces.

Before the PCs can rent the ship, however, they must get permission from Charles' boss, Sal of Sal's Necromantic and Mortuary Supplies.

Captain Bonerack: Int Average; AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 by staff SZ M; ML 11.
Bonerack's Crew (15): Int Average; AL LN; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 by short sword; SZ M; ML 9.

Encounter Three: Merchants

In order to book passage on the ships the PCs must speak with and convince one of these three merchants (dependent upon which Captain they talked with) to allow them on board, either as passengers, or extra guards.

Goldstein's Zakharan Imports
Steven is a loud, but crafty wholesale merchant (ala "Crazy Frank"). At first he will be against the PCs's offer to buy out the other passengers, but will hint at saying "yes" if one of the PCs buys a Zakharan rug from him. The rug in question is

rather ugly, and Steven needs to sell it for at least 50 gold pieces to re-coup his loss. If they buy the rug, the ship is theirs to hire.

Rusty's Suds
Rusty complains that his hop shipments are not reaching him due to piracy (but he suspects it's just masked competition by the Harpoon Brewery). Rusty talks as if he's had one too many "free samples," and encourages the PCs (especially dwarves and gnomes) to sample with him.

Anyone who drinks with Rusty will be given free passage on his ship, but he or she must make a Wisdom check or will purchase a small cask of Rusty's Suds for 25 gold pieces because of its rich, delightful, yet not overpowering flavor.

Sal's Necromantic and Mortuary Supplies
Sal is a little guy who drags out his S's (almost a hiss). He is a greasy, frightening man with shifty eyes and a suspicious nature. If the PCs ask about passage, Sal queries them as to whether or not they fear the "Ghost of Captain Pohl Strongwind... also known as the Undertaker, you know..."

After Sal does a few creepy, suspicious things, he will make a deal with the PCs. If they agree to bring back some ectoplasm from a ghost if they see one (Sal is very intrigued with it) he will grant them free passage.

These are the only three merchants who have ships available to the PCs.

Encounter Four: Press Gang

This encounter takes place as the PCs return to their ship from their meetings with the merchants. The encounter must happen before Encounter Five.

As the PCs return, they are ambushed by a press gang searching for easy victims. Press Gangs kidnap likely victims and throw them on a boat as deck hands for six months to a year. This gang is working for Captain Bonerack.

When the press gang begins to get the stuffing beat out of them, they will flee. Give each PC a roll vs Intelligence to determine that the gang is attempting to subdue them.

The moment combat is complete, the City Watch shows up and arrests the press gang (if they're defeated). If the PCs are losing to the press gang, have the Watch show up and save them from themselves. The remainder of the gang flees back to Bonerack's ship. The PCs may encounter them later if they take that particular ship.

Press Gang (6): AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; F2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 by long sword; SZ M; ML 13; 10 silver pieces each

Encounter Five: Still Not Enough

This encounter takes place when the PCs return to the captain of the vessel with permission to board. The captain, despite a writ from his employer, will not feel as if he is benefiting from this venture. Although he allows passage, he hints at a possible bribe to make their stay more comfortable.

Should the PCs make a cash bribe, then the quality of their rooms, food, and overall passage will increase according to the size of the bribe. Alternately, the PCs may bribe each of the three captains in a different way which will net them the "Moderate" quarters.

Captain Roger
Tell him a REALLY good joke
Cheap: no bribe
Moderate: 5-20 gold pieces
Nice: 21+ gold pieces

Captain Pete
Offer to cook for him (must have proficiency)
Cheap: no bribe to 5 gold pieces
Moderate 6-30 gold pieces
Nice: 31+ gold pieces

Captain Bonerack
Give him a minor magic item
Cheap: no bribe to 20 gold pieces
Moderate: 21-50 gold pieces
Nice: 50+ gold pieces.

Each captain will only except one bribe, and any subsequent bribes will be ignored.

CHEAP QUARTERS:
The quarters you are shown are horrid. There are several hammocks set up, all in disrepair. You can see the rats with whom you, no doubt, will be living for the next few days. You are quite sure that this cabin is only a step above sleeping in the hold.

MODERATE QUARTERS:
You are shown to two moderately decent cabins. Granted, that they are nothing fancy, but at least it beats sleeping in the hold.

NICE QUARTERS:
The captain himself shows you to an exquisitely lavish set of three cabins. As you climb below you notice the first mate carrying out his personal belonging and giving you a dirty look.

Shortly after stowing their gear, the ship sets sail for the last reported location of the ship—very near port.

"Look upon your deaths ye scurvy dogs, for I be Captain Strongwind."

Encounter Six: Ship Ahoy!

After only a few hours at sea, the PCs comes across a merchant ship adrift with the current. The captain knows that the *Fantastic Urge* was bound for their port. The ship's sails are furled and it runs slant wise to the wind.

From the crow's nest comes a call of "Ship ahoy!"

Looking to the starboard side you see a ship, apparently unmanned, drifting towards you. A deft move by the captain reveals the name on the gunwale: **Fantastic Urge.**

Allow the PCs to decide if they wish to board the other ship. If they do, they find a handful of survivors on the other ship, cowering in the hold—but must first get through the creature that Captain Strongwind left behind on the ship.

The monster has continued to terrorize the survivors in the cargo hold, and is the reason no one is manning the vessel. The creature lies in hiding, and gains automatic surprise on whoever boards the vessel first.

Ju-ju Zombie: Int Low; AL N(E); AC 4; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA Special; SD Special; MR Special; SZ M; ML 20

These extremely frightened NPCs babble aimlessly. The only common thread to their stories is a mention of an eerie ghost ship coming out of the fog. This ship drew along side, and a slaughter commenced as evil creatures boarded the vessel.

Only those who ran in fear to the lower deck survived, and their unearthly terror prevented them from returning to the upper deck. Closer examination reveals many of the survivors have gray hair. None of the survivors remember much of anything as to who, when, how, or where the attack occurred. These people are weak from exposure and supernatural powers, and could use water and rest.

Basically, the PCs is able to glean a little bit more atmospheric rumor from this encounter, which lends credence to the Strongwind rumors.

Encounter Seven: Song of Silence

Each of you is scattered across the ship when you hear the cry of land sighted. Straining your eyes to the port side of the ship, you notice a tiny outline of a rocky reef no bigger than half the ship. Figuring it to be of no importance, the captain shouts several orders and you are about to sail on past.

Suddenly, you hear an eerie song carried on the wind. The words are foreign to your ears, but they seem to call you forth, begging you to leave the ship.

Have each PC make a saving throw versus spells against the sirine's call at +2. Anyone who fails becomes charmed and will do everything in his/her power to set foot on the island. Six members of the crew will fail their saving throws and succumb to the sirine's wail, and members of the crew will help subdue those crewmen. Other NPC are unaffected.

If the ship attempts to land on the reef or approach the reef, the sirine will direct the sailors to moor the ship within earshot of her voice. Then she will indicate that she wishes to talk to the crew, captain, and PCs.

If the ship sails away anyone who did not save will have to be prevented from leaving the ship, else they will throw themselves overboard. The charmed will do whatever it takes to approach the island.

This is the island of the sirine Ha'sheen. Her song is normally a tactic used to lure unsuspecting sailors to their watery death. Should any sailor reach the reef alive, the Sirine will touch them, reducing their intelligence to a 2, and then command them to stay with her as servants.

The sirine wishes the PCs to do her a service. Pirates have become aware of her favorite haunts, and they have been sending catapult loads and ballista bolts her way. The sirine is not necessarily evil, she just wants to be left alone. If the PCs carries a message to Calvin Longbottle for her, she will let any charmed PCs or NPCs go, and will not hamper any merchant ships in the area. The message to Calvin is that she is willing to cooperate with him if his harbor patrol will look in this area more often for pirates.

Ha'sheen-Sirine: Int High; AL LG; AC 3; MV 12/sw 24; HD 7; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8+3 by long sword +3; SA spells/song charm; SD spells/water breathing; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14

Encounter Eight: Strongwind

As night falls and fog gathers around the ship, another ship appears out of the mists. This is the *Strongwind*, come to wreak its unholy vengeance on all who would ply these waters.

A call goes out from the crow's nest, "Ship Ahoy!" All hands are called to the deck. Looming out of the fog is a softly glowing, seaweed covered galleon.

With unearthly speed, the ancient galleon silently pulls along side your ship. With deft skill, or eerie coincidence, it grates against your bow, slowing you down and locking the two ships together. The ships rock to and fro, in a

slow motion dance as the wind dies and the fog thickens. Glancing up, you see a name carved on its prow: **Strongwind.**

An eerie voices booms from the ghost ship, sending a chill down your spine.

"Look upon your deaths ye scurvy dogs, for I be Captain Strongwind. Let those who sail the sea in the name of Sarbreen be on their way to Davey Jones' locker and a cold, watery death! Attack me hearties. Attack!"

The crew must make a collective morale check to stay on board (different morales for different ships). Even if the crew makes the morale check, they insist that the were not hired to fight unless necessary—and if the PCs is not yet dead, it's not yet necessary.

If PCs board the *Strongwind*, the crew will cut/push/hack their ship free as soon as the PCs go aboard on the *Strongwind*. This will leave the PCs stranded on the ghost ship, masters of their own fate. Meanwhile, the forces of Captain Strongwind are attempting to board the PCs' ship. However, Captain Strongwind will not leave his ship, and if the PCs are to destroy him they must leave the comforts of their ship.

The deck of the *Strongwind* is obscured in a damp, cold fog. There is a forecastle, a sterncastle, and three masts. The sails are reefed. A lantern burns in the crow's nest with an supernatural blue glow.

When the PCs have boarded, or Strongwind's minions board, have the PCs make a saving throw vs. spells or fall under the effect of a *cause fear* spell. (Use the same modifications for the saving throw from Encounter Seven). After the saves are rolled, the forces of Pohl Strongwind emerge from the mist to attack. The undead form of the ancient pirate cannot rest until he controls the Sea of Falling Stars.

Note: Clerics suffer a -4 to all attempts to turn undead for this encounter.

Ju-ju Zombies (5): Int Low; AL N(E); AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+12; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SA Special; SD Special; MR Special; SZ M; ML 20.

Pohl Strongwind—Coffer Corpse: AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 4; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 by hands or 1d8+1 by scimitar +1; SA see below; SD see below; SZ M; ML 20; Turns as spectre.

"A shocking realization grips you as you watch the ship dissolve around you."

Searching the *Strongwind*

After the PCs defeat Captain Strongwing, his ghostly corpus disappears. The PCs can search the *Strongwind* if they wish.

Inside the forecastle is the first mate's room, two other cabins, and an officer's mess. All three rooms are unkempt and abandoned. In the first mate's quarters is a suit of *leather armor +1*, human sized, on a stand.

There is a catapult on the sterncastle that is still operational, with one load of shot nearby. These ropes are in better shape than those on the other castle.

Inside the sterncastle is the chart room and the captain's quarters. In the chart room there is a chart on the table. Anyone with navigation proficiency will see that the current position of the *Strongwind* is exactly plotted on the chart that is spread out on the table. The remaining charts are worth 1,000 gold pieces to a mariner (such as Calvin Longbottle).

The captain's chamber contains a narrow bed, a wardrobe, a table with a sextant and spy glass hundreds of years old, a foot locker, and a pipe collection, all worth a total of 3,000 gold pieces.

A footlocker in the captains quarters also contains the following: a *potion of swimming, dust of healing* (as potion) w/4 pinches, and a 1,000 gold piece ruby. The remainder of Strongwind's treasure went to his grave with him, and may be left for another day.

Strongwind's Demise

Two turns after Captain Strongwind is defeated, read the following:

With a scream that sounds from the very depths of the dark waters about you the Ghost of Strongwind appears before you shrieking. Then, it melts into a bubbling puddle of orange goo.

You look with horror at the fluid excretion upon the floor and notice oddly that the boards upon which it rests are becoming strangely translucent, almost as if they're....

A shocking realization grips you as you watch the ship dissolve away around you.

The ship is disappearing around the PCs. They have enough time to search the room and find the footlocker. Any PC running up on deck notices (unless

action was taken) that the ship upon which they arrived has fled, stranding them. Over the course of one turn, the ship and its cargo will dissipate completely leaving the PCs floating in the Sea of Fallen Stars.

At this point, if stranded, the PCs are reduced to swimming and floating. PCs who are able to swim or remain alive for one hour will be rescued. After one hour, a merchant ship will pick up the PCs and return them to their home.

If the PCs have other magic that will allow them to make it back to port, these will work perfectly. The question here is what the PCs do to remain afloat for one hour. Among other things, they must:

- Discard any armor, even magical, that is bulkier than leather.

- Make two swimming checks or two Strength checks (Strength at -2).

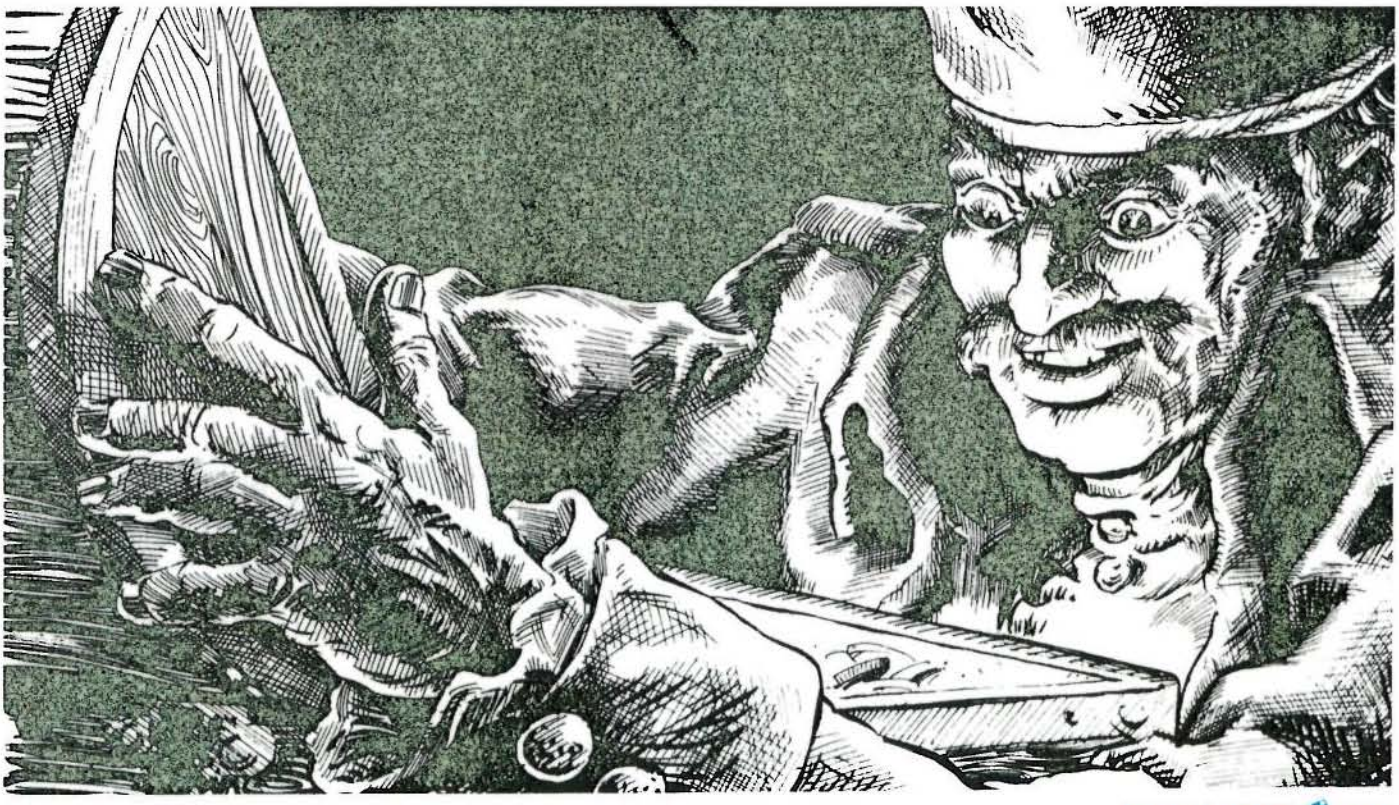
- PCs who are injured must either be cured or the above checks are at an additional -2. They must also discard their backpacks to stay afloat.

Conclusion

If the PCs make it back, Calvin Longbottle rewards them with the gold promised for the mission. If they bring back any of the artifacts found on the *Strongwind*, he gives the PCs the following magical items to choose from (*at most*, one for each PC, DM's discretion). All scrolls are written at 11th level of ability:

- *powder of coagulation*, 3 pinches
- *scale armor +1*
- *protection from water* scroll
- *true seeing* scroll
- *wand of flame extinguishing* (14 charges)
- 10 *arrows +1*
- *potion of fire resistance*
- *short sword +1/+2 vs. water-breathers*

News of the defeat of Captain Strongwind and his ghostly ship travel quickly throughout the ports around the Sea of Fallen Stars. The PCs will probably become minor celebrities in the area for this feat. They may have to deal with other groups claiming to have done the deed, or live down their reputation by hunting live pirates too. Or perhaps nastier undead await them, having been alerted to the presence of capable undead slayers in the area.



THE ISOLATION BLUES

The postman cometh. You meet him on the steps, anticipating the wonders he carries in his blue canvas bag. He smiles. With practiced ease, he brings from his satchel a bundle of letters, catalogues, phone bills, epistles from distant relatives, and there, amongst the sweepstakes notices and postcards from the edge, is the object of your heart's desire.

POLYHEDRON® magazine.

by Lance Hawvermale

You leave the rest of the mail in a fluttery heap on the kitchen table and stalk off to your gaming chamber to read.

Hmm... this issue's forty-eight pages are packed with information concerning conventions. Who fared well at GEN CON® Game Fair? How can convention-goers get the most out of the upcoming WINTER FANTASY® convention? What's the latest word from Ravens Bluff, and just how many points do you need to reach the rank of Grand Master Judge, anyway?

Quietly, you ignore all of that and flip through the newszine until you reach Ed Greenwood's latest installment of *Elminster's Everwinking Eye*. You read the article from alpha to omega, take copious notes on implementing these ideas into your own FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, then you promptly lay POLYHEDRON to rest in a cardboard box with a mound of others of its kind. Sadly, the remainder of the newszine holds little of interest to you.

You rarely attend conventions.

You've never visited the Living City.

You've never even sent an email.

Sigh.

You've got the Isolation Blues.

If you're one of the thousands of gamers who are experiencing a sense of separation from the roleplaying community, if you've ever wondered why POLYHEDRON magazine is oriented to the compass of conventions and tournaments instead of the true north of living-room gaming, then you've contracted a heavy case of the Isolation Blues. Because you seldom participate in public gaming events, you feel disjointed, disconnected, and generally left out.

There is a place for you within the RPGA® Network. No campaign is an island. Let the RPGA be your bridge.

Not That There's Anything Wrong With That

You have your own reasons for cultivating this solitude, of course. You either live in an area which is off the beaten convention path and find it financially impractical to attend, or you simply take great pleasure in your own small gaming group and have never felt a need to make contact with players via such channels as tournament play, online correspondence, or play-by-mail adventure scenarios. Your only desire is to create or participate in a campaign that is dynamic and multi-dimensional, with intricate plots, well-developed characters, and challenging storylines. You've little use for earning gaming points in the RPGA Network, or even meeting players outside your own private circle. What use, then, can you make of POLYHEDRON, a publication that seems geared toward the interactive gaming community at large?

No campaign is an island.
Let the RPGA be your bridge.

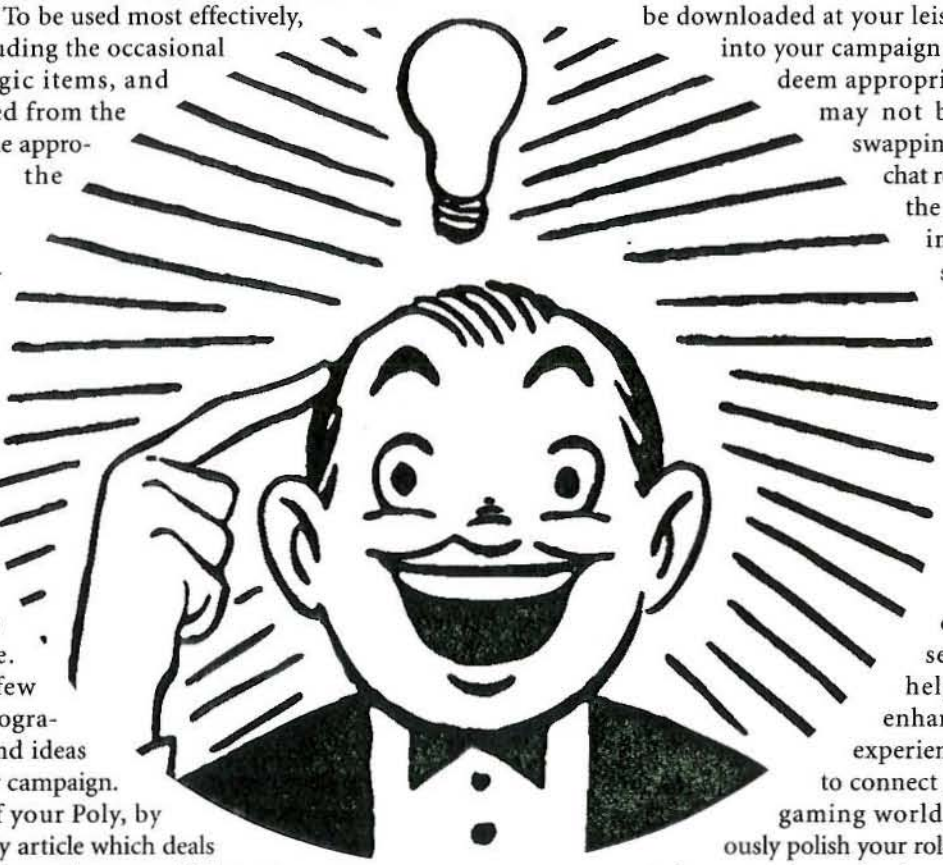
Here are several ways to maximize POLYHEDRON magazine's potential in even the most insular gaming groups.

What's In It For You

Why join the RPGA if you're not a convention-going gamer? This is really the fundamental question, as players languishing

with the Isolation Blues often can't find a reason to spend the money on a membership which addresses LIVING CITY characters and news from the world of cons and faraway tournaments.

The answer to this dilemma lies in the magazine itself. Granted, a gamer who never attends conventions has little use for the aspect of his membership package which permits him to play in RPGA-sanctioned tournament events, but POLYHEDRON alone is worth the price of admission. A goal of any serious gamemaster or player is to help create the most detailed, most enjoyable campaign world possible. The information found in the pages of POLYHEDRON can add depth and color to any gaming effort, even if that effort doesn't involve the lands of the Forgotten Realms or Ravens Bluff. For example, the aforementioned Elminster's Everwinking Eye is a constant in each issue. It's always there. It's Gibraltar. You can read it and count on it and know that each installment is going to add that much more detail to the campaign. To be used most effectively, articles like this—including the occasional pieces on deities, magic items, and spells—can be removed from the magazine and filed in the appropriate section in the gamemaster's notes.



Creativity Is Hiding Your Sources

And don't get stuck on proper nouns. Just because an article might describe the FORGOTTEN REALMS kingdom of High Emmerock and personages such as Khelben and Randal Morn, these names are by no means set in stone. Change the names, a few statistics, and a little geography, and these places and ideas can fit into virtually any campaign. Extend the shelf life of your Poly, by simply assimilating every article which deals with details of a campaign setting, even if that setting is not your own. The Personlities of Ravens Bluff can—with the timely flick of a pen—become the Personalities of Greyhawk, or Middle Earth, or even Rigel VII. As Francis Bacon once wrote, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." Ignore nothing. The information presented in POLYHEDRON is intended for dismemberment and digestion. Cut it, alter it, but certainly incorporate it.

But Wait, There's More

Need another reason to join the RPGA? Here are three: First, the Network is now producing special game modules available to members only—free of charge! These adventures are mailed to you each year as part of your renewal package when you extend your membership, and what gamemaster isn't eager for a fresh adventure to liven up his campaign?

Secondly, even more such tournament-style adventures are routinely offered by the Network on the RPGA's official website. Only members have access to these adventures, which can be downloaded at your leisure and inserted into your campaign world where you deem appropriate. Though you may not be interested in swapping war stories in a chat room or discussing the merits of LARPing, the Network still has much to offer online for the serious gamer.

Finally, also holding court on the web are RPGA gaming specialists, folks who present online training seminars with helpful hints to enhance your gaming experience. The best way to connect yourself with the gaming world and simultaneously polish your roleplaying talents is to log on and get a few lessons from some of the Network's top judges.

...even if you've never attended a convention in your life... the RPGA has much to offer...

So even if you've never attended a convention in your life and have no plans of ever creating a character for the LIVING CITY campaign, the RPGA still has much to offer, even to the most lonely roleplayer. Isolated gamers of the world, unite!

How To Enrich Your Campaign With Material From Outside Sources

Now that you've made the most of POLYHEDRON, you'll want to quickly branch out, taking advantage of the Network's many resources. Though you might be initially reluctant to attempt to open correspondence with a fellow gamer advertising in the magazine's classified ads, the RPGA coordinators are in the business of promoting the game, and they'll be happy to help

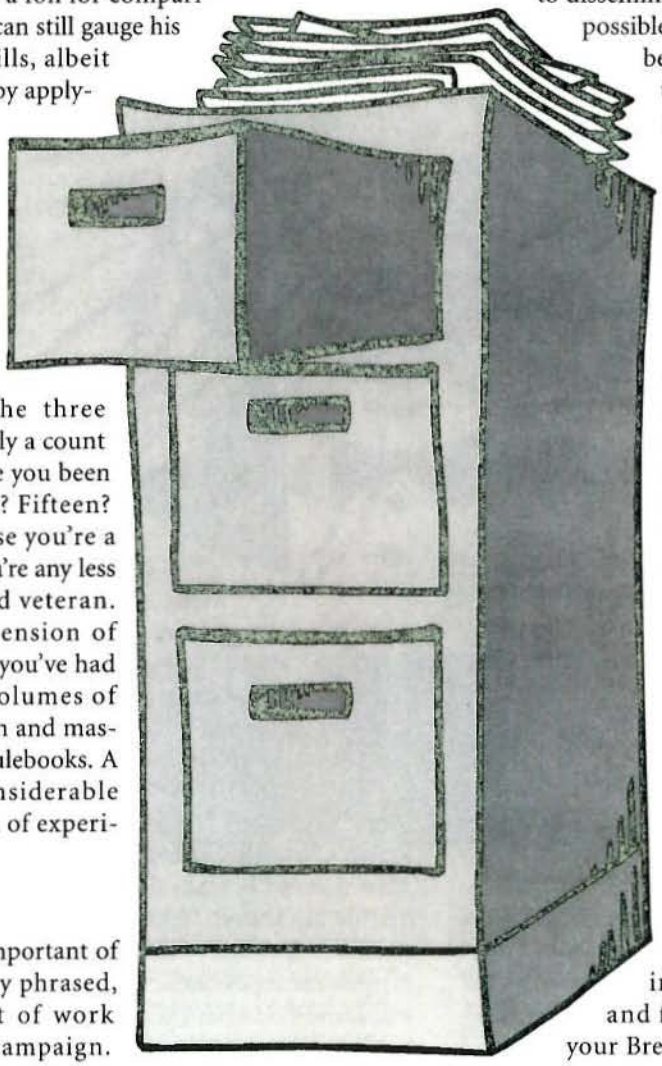
you make contact with others in the hobby. In order for you to build a campaign of texture and detail, you'll need to make use of all the resources at your disposal. That often means getting material from other players.

The hobby of roleplaying thrives because it's in a never-ending process of construction. Players are continuously adding to the body of rules and adventures. Upon request, the Network will send you a listing of other RPGA members in your area. Talk with these members, trade material with them, and before you know it, you'll have an inoculation for that case of the Isolation Blues that's got you feeling under the roleplaying weather.

How To Rate Yourself As A Player or Judge

The pages of POLYHEDRON are consistently filled with discussions of the RPGA point system for tournament-attending players and judges. By participating in gaming events, players earn "experience points" which advance them up the Network ladder, somewhere at the top of which stands the mythical ranking of Paragon. Great, you say. Conventioneers can compare their ratings and get an idea of their prowess as roleplayers and gamemasters. But what about me? I don't play in tournament events, but I'd still like to know how I rate in the hobby. What can I do?

Never fear. Without a foil for comparison, the isolated player can still gauge his or her own gaming skills, albeit somewhat subjectively, by applying the Three Dimensions of Roleplaying: Length, Depth, and Breadth.



Length

Length is simply your tenure as a roleplayer. It is perhaps the most overrated of the three dimensions, being simply a count of years. How long have you been roleplaying? One year? Fifteen? Obviously, just because you're a rookie doesn't mean you're any less skillful than a grizzled veteran. However, a long dimension of Length does mean that you've had time to accumulate volumes of notes for your campaign and master the nuances of the rulebooks. A roleplayer with a considerable Length brings a wealth of experience to the table.

Depth

Depth is the most important of the dimensions. Simply phrased, Depth is the amount of work you've put into your campaign. Depth is the late nights laboring to detail a lost dwarven kingdom. Depth is creating a language tree for the various races of your world, drawing painstaking maps of even the most distant campaign corners, and carefully crafting pages of NPCs. Depth is simply creativity and hard work.

For players, Depth is a long and detailed character history, extensive equipment notes, and a personal log of the campaign world as seen through the eyes of the character. To get an idea of your own Depth, take inventory of your gaming records. Do they fill a single notebook? A filing cabinet? A small library? The players with the greatest degree of Depth will make full use of available material for his or her particular game, and then sit down and fill in all the gaps with exacting detail.

Polyhedron and other magazines can be vehicles to convey your ideas to the public.

Breadth

Breadth is the most difficult dimension for the isolated gamer to master. Essentially, Breadth measures your willingness to disseminate your expertise to as wide an audience as possible. Though your private gaming circle might be far removed from the heart of the interactive roleplaying community, the fact of the matter is that the game itself evolves through the constant interchange of ideas between its players. The game is not static. It is continuously being built by those who play it.

Breadth, then, measures your efforts to share the wealth of your knowledge with other players. This can be as simple as committing your personal campaign world to the Internet, so that others can make use of the setting you have so diligently created.

Breadth also entails placing your ideas in professional gaming publications. POLYHEDRON and other magazines can be vehicles to convey your ideas to the public, thereby increasing your impact on the game and further widening your Breadth. While tour-

nament participants have many opportunities to broaden their knowledge by making contact with other players at conventions, the isolated gamer must rely on other sources to enhance this third and final dimension of his roleplaying efforts.

So just because the back of your RPGA membership card may not list you as a Grand Master, you might very well rank amongst the hobby's elite. Sit back and review your own efforts in terms of Length, Depth, and Breadth, and you'll get a pretty good idea of just how much you've accomplished... and just how far you need to go to reach your own private rank of Paragon.

How To Ensure That Your Campaign World Is As Good As Anything Going

Even after measuring your efforts against the Three Dimensions of Roleplaying, it's still difficult to know how your campaign compares to those which benefit from the constant influx of ideas from conventions and online sources. Here are some tips on how to make your gaming circle the best that it can be.

Stay Current

Even though you may be removed from the ongoing gaming loop, you can still stay up-to-date on changes in the game by subscribing to such publications as POLYHEDRON. Roleplaying, by its very nature, is in a constant state of change. New concepts such as LARPs and the DRAGONLANCE® SAGA® rules are constantly being added to the game and altering its nature in fresh and exciting ways. Read what's being said about the game, clip and save those articles which can add Depth to your campaign, and before you know it, your island won't feel so isolated anymore.

> As Francis Bacon once wrote, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province."

Invite New Players

Don't be content to keep your game to yourself. Introducing a person to roleplaying can be a fun and rewarding experience. Welcoming a new player into your isolated circle not only increases your Breadth, it also brings yet another batch of ideas into the group. By inviting someone to journey into your campaign world, you keep that world growing. And growth is one of the big advantages to roleplaying

Read Everything

Make a point of building a library of non-game-related texts from which to draw material for your campaign, adding color and historical fact to your roleplaying sessions. For a fantasy milieu, books might include such topics as the Celtic druids, the Vikings, Charlemagne, and the Italian Renaissance. A Shadowrun campaign could be enhanced with books on paranormal psychology, Native American mythology, and computer technology. Research such as this is what the dimension of Depth is all about.

Use The Network

Hey, that's what it's there for. The RPGA was established to join players in their collective efforts to enrich the hobby. And if you're one of the many gamers who live in a remote region of the planet where it's impractical to attend conventions, the RPGA can even help you organize and host a convention of your own!

So grab hold of POLYHEDRON and the entire Network and make them your own. Whether you're a convention-goer or not, the Network exists so that you can add a bit of your own efforts to the ever-changing hobby of roleplaying. The bridge is out there. Don't be afraid to cross it.

Here's Yet Another Way to Get Involved:

Vote in the Origins awards!

Flip to the ballot on the back page of this issue, photocopy it (or rip it out if you're not picky), fill it out, and mail it in! You don't have to vote for TSR products, but it would be great if you did. The deadline is soon, so don't delay.

LIVING GALAXY™ countdown

by Jeff Quick

The next page is an excerpt from the upcoming STAR*DRIVE™ campaign book for TSR's new ALTERNITY® science-fiction role-playing game. If you didn't know yet, we're planning on introducing a LIVING GALAXY setting in 1999. And we're getting a lot of support from the ALTERNITY designers and editors to make it happen.

From the very beginning, the RPGA® Network has been given our own star system to play in. It's almost as if the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ team had turned over the whole of The Vast to our Ravens Bluff players.

Our campaign will be in a region of space known as the Verge, on the edge of known space. Our star system is called Argos. And the main inhabitable planet in the Argos system is called Marybelle. Marybelle is our Ravens Bluff, our virtual Seattle. A few rough ideas about Marybelle have been set out. For instance, the planet is in the final stages of being terraformed to a less toxic atmosphere. Until then, its inhabitants live in domed cities. We get to decide the rest.

Background

You'll need a little history for the next page to make sense, but it goes like this: humans had spread across a LOT of space, when they suddenly got into a war among themselves back home.

As a result of the war, systems nearer to the center of explored space stopped talking to the far away systems; it wasn't cost effective. The farther systems called this the Long Silence. So, without any help from home, they just got on with their lives.

Recently however, the home powers ended their war and are re-establishing contact with their long-lost colonies, whether they want it or not.

This is where the Verge stands now.

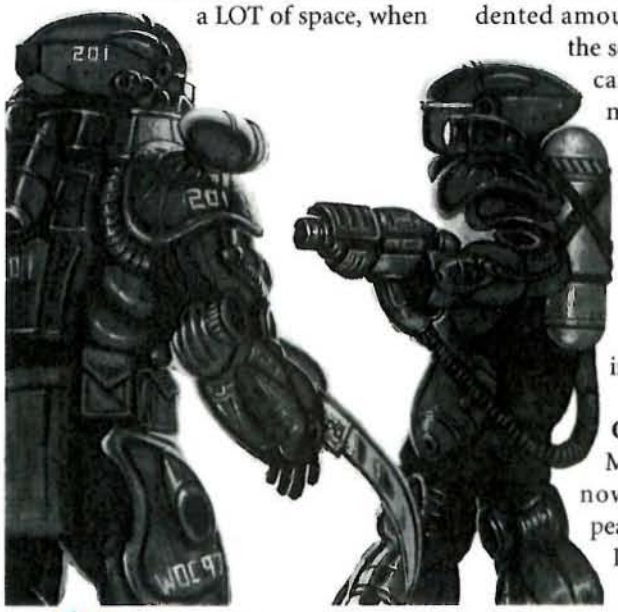
What's Special

Obviously, HQ could find some people and throw out *another* LIVING™ setting for members to play. But we've done that. We want to try something different, and let members design the LIVING GALAXY campaign from the ground up.

This is a grand experiment to see how far we can go with defining our own setting. Your input is the only thing which will make this project fly.

Not everyone will want to design. This is fine. When we launch the campaign at GEN CON® Game Fair '99, we'll throw open the doors for players. But for those who love campaign building, we're going to take the next year to try to make things like WE want them.

In addition to creative control, our proposal for Marybelle is an unprecedented amount of player control over the setting too. Player charaters can be in charge of government, businesses, space freighters, or nothing at all.



Marybelle is still a small settlement, but has much room for growth. Some areas we need to make some choices about include:

Government
Marybelle is a republic right now, but that could change peacefully or in a messy coup. Do you want a monarchy? A technocracy? Do YOU want to run a governor character and make rules for a city? Can you take the heat if you make bad decisions and still have to run for office next year?

Law
Is Marybelle a tightly-run civic utopia or a den of thieves? Or both? What's against the law on Marybelle, and how do they punish offenders? What is the law enforcement branch of Marybelle like? Ruthless? Donut Jockeys?

Business
Large companies run the terraforming stations. But who runs the businesses? Besides large companies, such a cosmopolitan setting will have opportunity for many smaller businesses, too. What sort of entrepreneurial opportunities exist on a new planet?

Geography
Where are all these domed cities exactly? Near each other? Spread out? Next to giant craters or along mountain ranges? Is anyone interested in hammering out a world map for Marybelle?

Rules
Which optional rules will we use? Do people prefer heavy realism, or more quick-and-dirty action games? Will we include cybernetics and psionics?

Adventures
Soon after we get details fleshed out, we'll want to start plotting and writing adventures.

The STAR*DRIVE campaign book will be out in July, so marshall your thoughts and ideas until we can all get a look at it.

I'll be moderating ideas in the RPGA room at the website on a regular schedule. I've already heard from a couple of interested people, but there's always room for more! Email me here at <polyhedron@wizards.com> if you're interested.

ARGOS SYSTEM

Not far from the cosmopolitan Aegis system lies the Argos system, one of the more interesting places in the Verge. Argos is a binary star system that has attracted explorers, scientists, and colonists. The first billion years of the Argos system passed in fairly mundane fashion; 12 planets formed orbits about a yellow G5 star. These planets were a mixed collection of Jovian gas giants and terrestrial worlds-the most famous of which is Marybelle. Eventually, this star's course took it close to a second star, and the two systems became one.

History

In 2322, explorers from Bluefall came to the Argos system and discovered worlds ripe with potential. Instead of claiming the system for their new united stellar nation, citizens of what used to be New Columbia settled the Argos system independently. These colonists belonged to political groups that had opposed the Orion unificaffon for various reasons, and they hoped to make a fresh start. Since the Argos system didn't have a Class I world, it didn't hold much interest for the stellar nations; no one wanted to fight over it. Thus, these colonists made their claim unchallenged by any other nation or system.

During the Long Silence, the worlds of the Argos system becarne a haven for refugees and independents. The first leadership councils opened Marybelle for colonization without regard to stellar origin, species, or nationality. As a result, the Argos system—a common milepost for travelers moving from the center of the Verge to its further edge-became home to diverse interests.

In general, the inhabitants of this system ignored the return of stellar nations-even though their presence improved the local economy. Currently, the stellar nations have offered the use of technology to advance the terraforming of Marybelle, and representatives from the nations of the Stellar Ring have expressed a desire to bring the planet and the system into their individual folds. The local population has simply declined.

Argos A and B

Four worlds orbit Argos A, a K5 star that has already seen the passage of more than 12 billion years. Two of these worlds are gas giants large enough to influence the orbit of their parent star. Another is a lifeless rock without interest to anyone. Proteasa, the fourth planet, lies just beyond the lifebearing orbit of Argos and has developed sulphur-based organisms that include both animal and vegetable life. However, scientists haven't confirmed the presence of sentient life on Proteasa.

The pleasant warmth of Argos B bathes its young planets; however, none of these worlds has developed life. Given time, either Marybelle (G2/R1/A3/P3/H2) or Hartrest (G2/R1/A3/P4/H3), two planets that lie within Argos B's habitable ring, may one day produce their own biosphere. The arrival of sentients, though, has changed the planets' destinies; these colonists have their own planss.

Marybelle

For more than 100 years, scientists have struggled to alter Marybelle's planetology. The first stage focused on releasing the hydrogen and oxygen locked within the planetary crust. Stage one ended successfully in 2450 with the planet cloaked in a primitive atmosphere dominated by water vapor. The second stage focused on cooling the planet. This stage has also been successful, as the water vapor has condensed into great rainfall for the last 50 years. Although once a landlocked world, Marybelle now possesses several oceans.

As stage two draws to a close, scientists have begun the third and final stage of terraforming. Dozens of stations located all over the planet transform Marybelle's atmosphere. Some chemically break down molecules in the air. Others follow the model of Earth's own evolution, releasing millions of bacteria and tiny plantlike organisms into Marybelle's virgin seas. Through photosynthesis, the young plants take in carbon dioxide and water to produce energy; the byproduct of this process, oxygen, is what interests the planetologists. Already, the planet's oceans brim with photosynthesizing life. Scientists promise that within a decade, no one will require filter masks and e-suits when walking about on the planet's surface.

Politically, Marybelle's government is a republic; citizens choose members of their governing council through annual electrons. Of course, the terraforming factions wield considerable sway over planetary politics, but their very successes may soon render these scientific conglomerates obsolete. After all why support a huge team of terraformers when the project is complete?

GRAPH System

The letters and numbers next to planet names are shorthand for planetary environmental conditions. GRAPH stands for Gravity, Radiation, Atmosphere, Pressure, and Heat & Cold Extremes. Generally, for both Marybelle and Hartrest the numbers approach earth-like. A3 means "toxic atmosphere" which requires heroes to wear repsirator masks outside. H3 stands for "Torrid" heat, with average planetary temperatures in the 50° C (125° F) range.

Verge Confederation

Since its formation in 2468, the Verge Confederation has used one of Marybelle's cities as its headquarters. Originally, the Verge Confederation served as a unifying political body for all of the systems of the Verge. It's said that the Regent of Bluefall once hoped that the Confederaffon could someday form the basis of a Verge League that functioned much like the Orion League in the Stellar Ring. In the early days of the Long Silence anything seemed possible.

Circumstances of history have done away with the possibility of a united Verge. Instead, the Confederation lives on as a talent and employment agency for explorers, operatives, and troubleshooters of all types. When someone needs special assistance, they can hire someone in the Confederation to help.

Atilis jil Utir (Fm/Argos/DMW-8) oversees the Confeds (see Introduction to the Verge for more information).

Convention Postings

This big list of boring text is all the conventions from whom we have received scoring packets in the last year and a half. If a convention is on this list, we have posted results from it on the web. If a convention is not on this list, go bother your con coordinator, because we haven't gotten them (don't ask about May or June cons yet, since we can't vouch for those at time of print). For listings eariler than 1997, see our website for details <www.tsr.com/rpga>.

Australia

CANCON 97	1/25/97
Phenomenon 97	6/6/97
Arcanacon 15	7/3/97
Necronomicon 97	10/4/97
MacQuariecon 97	12/12/97
CANCON 98	1/24/98
Fraser Invitational	3/1/98
Conquest 98	4/10/98

Canada

Gryphcon 1997	2/7/97
West Lorne Gameday	8/23/97
Purple Dragon	10/17/97
Bar Con 2	10/24/97
Weekend in the Jungle 2	10/25/97
Bar Con 3	10/31/97
Weekend of Horror 2	11/1/97
Watsfic Fall 97	11/15/97
Watsfic	2/14/98
Watsfic	3/20/98

New Zealand (Aotearoa)

Kapcon 97	1/19/97

United States

Sunquest '97	1/2/97
Star Tron 3	1/3/97
Marscon '97	1/10/97
Questcon 1.1	1/10/97
Luster Game Days	1/15/97
Living City War Weekend	1/18/97
Pandemonion 14	1/18/97
At Con 97	1/23/97
LAGA Games	1/25/97
Mountaineer Game Day	1/25/97
Dreamation 97	1/30/97
Con Of The North	1/31/97
Purple Dragon	1/31/97
Warcon '97	1/31/97
Mon Con 2	2/1/97
Pgco Birthday Bash	2/7/97
Constitution 5	2/14/97
Genghis Con 18	2/14/97
Orc Con '97	2/14/97
Questcon 1.2	2/14/97
Dun Dra Con	2/15/97
LAGA Games	2/15/97
Total Confusion '97	2/20/97
Gamicon Eta	2/21/97
Dogs Revisit Ravens Bluff	2/22/97
Branscon	2/28/97
ORavens Bluffcon	2/28/97
Cy-Con	3/1/97
Mountaineer Game Day	3/1/97
Americon	3/7/97
Coscon '97	3/7/97
LAGA Games	3/8/97
Moo Con '97	3/14/97
Quest Con 9	3/14/97
Day Of The Spot 2	3/15/97
Mega Con	3/15/97
Pacific Questmaster Game Day	3/15/97
Watsfic	3/15/97
ConnCon 97	3/20/97
Legend Con 11	3/20/97
Leprecon 2	3/21/97
Dan Con 4	3/22/97
Kettering Game Fair 16	3/22/97
Steele Justicon	3/28/97
Bogglecon 5	3/29/97
Allusions	4/4/97
LAGA Games	4/4/97
Neocon 8	4/4/97
Techcon 5	4/5/97
Questcon 10	4/11/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/11/97
Aethercon 2	4/12/97
Old Oeridian Game Day	4/13/97
Venture-Con '97	4/18/97
Ville Con 9	4/18/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/18/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/19/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/19/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/20/97
Gamer Con West Va	4/24/97
Cap Con 97	4/25/97
Noah Con '97	4/25/97
Steele Justicon	4/25/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/25/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3 OK	4/25/97
Weekend In Ravens Bluff 3	4/26/97
Weekend in Ravens Bluff 97 TX	4/26/97
California Game Day	5/15/97
LAGA Games	5/15/97
Luster Game Days	5/15/97
Ravenstone Games Game Day	5/15/97
Oasis	5/16/97
Shauncon	5/16/97
Gamex 12	5/23/97
Three Rivers Game Fest	5/23/97
Con B.O.B.	5/24/97
Ben Con 1997	5/29/97
Thundercon 7	5/30/97
Weekend In The Jungle	5/30/97
Bar Con	6/6/97
ConMan Gaming Convention 6/6/97	
Summer Revel	6/6/97
Death In The Jungle	6/7/97
Old Oeridian Summer Bash 2	6/14/97
Luster Game Days	6/15/97
Mountaineer Game Day 3	6/15/97
Ravenstone Gameday	6/15/97
Polycon XV	6/20/97
San Con 4	6/20/97
Moocon 3.5/Contingency	6/21/97
Dragon Con	6/26/97
Weekend Of Horror	6/27/97
June CA Gameday	6/28/97
LAGA Games	6/28/97
Game Day	6/28/97
Steele Justicon	6/28/97
Dex Con 6	7/2/97
July Game Day	7/5/97
Mon Con 3	7/5/97
Octi-Khan	7/11/97
Questcon 1.7	7/11/97
Quincon	7/11/97
LAGA Games	7/12/97
Ravenstone Gameday July 97	7/12/97
Luster Game Days	7/15/97
Comicon '97	7/16/97
Origins '97	7/16/97
Dark Con	7/18/97
Watsfic Summer 97	7/19/97
Gam Living Weekend	7/20/97
Concussion	7/24/97
Ken Con	7/26/97
LAGA Games	8/2/97
Man Con 1	8/2/97
Modesto Game Day	8/2/97
Ravenstone Game Day	8/3/97
Gen Con 30	8/10/97
Luster Game Days	8/15/97
GAM Living Weekend 2	8/23/97
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DM TIPS: When Combat Goes Critical

by Matt Brebner

Page 61 of the DMG (#2100) has good suggestions for 'Two Workable Critical Hit Systems'. I have an alternative approach that may appeal to DMs. In the eight years I've used this system, I have found it adds a dose of unpredictability to combat, and helps keep it fresh for battle-hardened players. At its best, it can add real excitement and humor to otherwise humdrum clashes.

Critical Hits

Every natural 20 rolled in combat indicates an automatic hit, which may become a "critical" hit. Another d20 roll is made as a "critical check." If it would hit the opponent's AC again, this indicates that the first roll was in fact a critical hit. A miss on the second roll indicates that the hit was a normal blow (this 2-roll system reduces the chances of kobolds inflicting undue damage on mighty opponents).

Results of a critical hit: the attacker claims maximum damage for that weapon, plus all bonuses applicable. The damage for the weapon alone is then rolled again and added to the total. For example, Grimshaw the dwarven warrior rolls a 20 against his bugbear opponent in melee. His critical check roll is 14, high enough to hit the bugbear normally, so he can claim the critical hit. He gets an automatic 10 points' damage for his *battle axe +2* (1-8+2) then adds 1 for strength of 16 and 1 for the *prayer* spell currently in effect on the PC party, for a total of 12 points of damage so far. He then rolls a single d8 again for the weapon's basic damage with no other bonuses counted, for a total of 13-20 points damage.

The larger the weapon, the greater the potential damage. A dagger or light crossbow bolt would generate modest critical hit damage of 5-8 points (+ any bonuses applicable); a two-handed sword could inflict up to 18 additional points against a large foe. The same applies to monster attacks, whether by claw, fang or weapon.

Critical Fumbles

Any roll of 1 results in misfortune, and possibly worse. A second d20 critical check is made. A result of 1-15 implies a tripping over, dropped weapon, or interfering backpack strap (DM to adjudicate), resulting in loss of any and all combat attacks for the round. An automatic initiative roll of 10 is incurred the following round for the character who fumbled, as s/he picks himself up, recovers the weapon, or rearranges his/her gear, but normal attacks can then be made.

A special kind of fumble can occur when a PC attempts to employ missile fire (or wands that require a to hit roll) in crowded melee conditions. A PC who fumbles while shooting past his fellow PCs runs the risk of wounding one of his colleagues with "friendly" fire if the "critical check" roll is 5 or less on the d20. The fumbling PC must then roll a normal to hit roll against the colleague who is most obviously in the line of fire, with all bonuses for range, magic, rear attacks, etc, applicable. Ouch. *Chant, bless,* or *prayer* spells whose bonuses apply specifically against hostile targets, however, would not count in this instance.

A roll of 16-20 on the critical check indicates that the PC's weapon was damaged, and will retain a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls until a *mend* spell is cast upon it. This is technically outside the prerogative of the 1st level spell, but if damage is allowed against weapons, then means of repairing it should be available as well.

Quick Fix

I allow my players to carry a 3rd level Wizard spell entitled *mend weapon*, and a 5th level spell, *mend magical weapon* (with a 1000 gp powdered diamond required as a spell component) specifically to offset fumble damage to weapons incurred by this system. The spell can not be used to repair any other kind of equipment damage or to shortcut the kinds of repair that a specialist craftsman would be needed for. Fumble damage is cumulative, too, so that a paladin's Holy Avenger sword might finish a particularly luckless mission at -3 to hit and damage until it's mended via the spell or through the usual time-consuming weaponsmith methods.

What of missile fire weapons? If they have a string, it breaks. This can spell disaster for PCs who don't list spare strings on their equipment sheets (especially those wood elven specialists with their bonded bows). Hurled weapons with a wooden shaft typically have the shaft split so that the item is not usable without repair. Sling pouches rupture and are useless.

Monsters who fumble suffer the same penalties as PCs if using weapons. If they use multiple attack routines, then the DM adjudicates the most suitable result, which might be the loss of all attacks following the fumble. In the case of multi-legged opponents that can't really fall over, or more powerful opponents, I make the fumble cancel out any one hit that round. In any case, fumble incurs the automatic initiative of 10 the following round.

Any character or monster falling over in combat incurs the normal penalties applying to a prone opponent, ie. loss of AC bonuses due to dexterity, and a +4 to hit bonus on their opponent's next strike.

Procan
Lord of the Seven Seas

by Eric L. Boyd

Powers That Be

Procan

Lord of the Seven Seas, The Ancient Mariner, Sailor of Sea and Sky, The Storm Lord, Prince of Winds

Intermediate Power of Limbo, CN

Portfolio:
Oceans, seas, weather, salt, sailing, navigation

Aliases:
none

Domain Name:
Limbo/Seasedge

Superior:
None

Allies:
Aerdrie Faenya, Atroa, Celestian, Deep Sashelas, Easdro, Fharlanghn, Sotillon, Stronmaus, Telchur, Velnius, Water Lion, Zilchus

Foes:
Dagon, Osprem, Panzuriel, Phaulkon, Sekolah, Xerbo

Symbol:
Trident over a cresting wave

Wor. Align.:
NG, CG, N, CN, NE, CE

*Procan (pro-KAN) is the Oeridian god of things nautical and meteorological, worshiped in ports along the coasts of the Flanaess and by humans of all ethnicities, particularly fishers and sailors who seek to placate his tempestuous nature. Procan is also worshiped in inland regions of the Flanaess of predominantly Oerdian set-*tlement, albeit to a lesser extent, as the god of weather. This aspect of his portfolio is closest to his original role amongst the Oerid tribes but also overlaps with that of Velnius. A few sentient aquatic creatures, particularly mermen, worship him as well.

Procan is served by Velnius and the four Wind Gods—Atroa of the East Wind, Sotillon of the Sirocco, Telchur of the Mistral, and Wenta of the Zephyr—all of whom are among his offspring. The Lord of the Seven Seas maintains good relations with most other powers of the Oeridian pantheon, with the notable exceptions of Heironeous and Hextor, Suel gods of the sea and sky.

The Sailor of Sea and Sky is as mercurial as the wind, as powerful and unforgiving as the oceans. Procan vacillates between ebullient high spirits, characterized by humor and passion for life, and dark, morose brooding, characterized by pessimism and a violent temper. The only constant in Procan's emotional state is that neither extreme persists for long. He is ever greedy for treasure, hoarding that which grows or falls on the sea bed.

The Church

Clergy: Clerics, crusaders, specialty priests
Clergy's Align.: CG, CN, CE
Turn Undead: C: Yes, Cru: No, SP: Yes
Cmnd. Undead: C: No, Cru: No, SP: No

All clerics, crusaders, and specialty priests of Procan receive religion (Oeridian, common, sea) as a bonus nonweapon proficiency.

Along the coasts of the lands once held by the Kingdom of Aerdy, the primacy of the church of Procan with regards to the sea is unchallenged. As Xerbo's faith is spread among the seafaring barbarians of the Thillonrian peninsula and the merchants of Lendore Isle, and Osprem's among the merchants of Lendore Isle and the Lordship of the Isles, naval conflicts between those realms and the Great Kingdom have a religious dimension as well.

Along the coast of the Azure Sea and in other regions where worship of both Suel and Oerid pantheons is common however, followers of Procan, Osprem, and Xerbo often sail together on the same ships, and even ally against outside threats. Since

Procan embodies the wilder and tempestuous aspects of the ever-changing seas however, his church is viewed distrust compared to his rivals, Osprem, and Xerbo. As a result, his faith slowly wanes in the Sheldomar Valley region.

Regionally prominent temples of the Lord of the Seven Seas are great granite structures whose soaring spires seem to touch the sky. The Ancient Mariner's cathedrals are built to embrace both storms and the sea. Most are drafty, damp, and set in the path of incoming storms. Procan's shoreline temples are typically situated on rain-lashed bluffs overlooking the sea. Inland temples sit in the foothills of one of the mountain ranges of the Flanaess atop the highest tor in the local region or amid low-lying salt flats. Smaller chapels and shrines catering to sailors are known as bethels. They can be found dockside in most port cities where followers of the Ancient Mariner live or visit.

Procan Novices are known as Swabs. Full priests are known as Sea Salts. In ascending order, titles used by Procanite priests are Sailor of the Seven Seas, Helmsman of the Endless Swells, Ensign of the Pounding Surf, Lieutenant Commander of Cresting Wave, Commander of the Lashing Wind, Captain of the Sea and Sky, High Captain of the Thunderous Storm, and Admiral of the Hurricane's Eye. High-ranking priests have unique individual titles, but are collectively known as High Admirals. Specialty priests are known as wave rangers.

Clergy includes humans (87%), mermen (10%), half-elves (2%), and other races (1%). Humans come fromOerid (60%), Flannae (7%), Baklunkish (5%), Suel (2%), Olman (1%), and mixed (25%) ancestry. Procan's clergy includes specialty priests (54%), clerics (including multi-classed) (30%), and crusaders (16%). Males and females have about a two to one ratio.

Dogma: The salty seas and stormy skies are everchanging; they defy prediction. The deep waters that embrace the oerth are vast and unknown. Their endless waves can ensnare any ship not captained by the Ancient Mariner. Therefore, give reverence to the Lord of the Seven Seas, for his fury is the thunderous storm and his kindness the bountiful blue deeps. All is born from the sea and sky, and to the blue expanse shall return.

Day-to-Day Activities: The majority of Procan's priests live and dress simply, eschewing formal ritual. They attend to those who earn their living on the seas, and often accompany them on sea voyages, for their presence aboard is said to bring good luck. Senior priests often captain their own vessels or fund fishing and merchant fleets.

Holy Days/Important Ceremonies: Followers of Procan offer prayers to the Lord of the Seven Seas at high and low tide each day. More formal ceremonies occur at peak high and low tides of each month and for crews prior to extended sea voyages. When possible, such ceremonies are held in tidal pools or at the high tidemark, always near the largest body of water in the region. They cast offerings of gold and pearls into the sea, and eat small amounts of fish and bread.

Affiliated Orders: The Wolves of the Scarlet Sea are a knightly order of crusaders and warriors who serve as the Storm Lord's militant arm. They are active in many port cities of the Flanaess. Sea Wolves, as they are known, serve as marines aboard Procan ships. They are well-versed in sea combat, boarding techniques, and ship-based assault. Many possess magic to venture underwater. The Keoish branch of the order sponsors twenty privateer ships in the Azure Sea. They combat piracy and have increased maritime commerce safety along the southern coasts of the Flanaess.

Priestly Vestments: The ceremonial garb of Procan's clergy includes dark blue knickers, loose, white shirts, and sky blue or sea green half-capes or robes. Garments are commonly washed in sea water, so are usually salt-encrusted. Sea Salts typically let their hair grow long, pulling it back in a ponytail. Male priests keep their beards neatly trimmed. Silver and gold jewelry is common and ostentatious. No priest of Procan is ever without a trident or flask of sea water (from which their holy water is consecrated). Their holy symbol is a miniature silver trident, often worn as a pendant on a thin silver chain.

Adventuring Garb: Shields and chain mail are common on land, but leather armor predominates in shipboard situations. Cutlasses, tridents, harpoons, nets, and other "sailor" weapons are preferred, and magic which aids in surviving the sea is prized.

Specialty Priests (Wave Rangers)

Requirements:	Con 14, Wis 9
Prime Req.:	Constitution, Wisdom
Alignment:	CN
Weapons:	All bludgeoning (Type B) weapons, cutlass, harpoon, net, spear, staff-sling, and trident
Armor:	chain mail and below; shield
Major Spheres:	All, chaos, combat, divination, elemental (air, water), healing, protection, summoning (aquatic creatures only), sun, weather
Minor Spheres:	Animal, charm, creation, necromantic, plant, travelers, war
Magical Items:	as clerics and fighters
Req. Profs:	Spear or trident, navigation, rope use
Bonus Profs:	Seamanship, swimming, weather sense

Granted Powers

- Wave rangers can turn undead of the sea including lacedons and sea zombies.
- At 1st level, wave rangers can cast *create water* (as the 1st level priest spell) thrice per day.
- At 3rd level, wave rangers can cast *water breathing* or *water walk* (as the 3rd level priest spells) once per day.
- At 5th level, wave rangers can cast *call lightning* (as the 3rd level priest spell) or *weather prediction* (as the 3rd level priest spell detailed in *Player's Option™: Spells & Magic*) once per day.
- At 7th level, wave rangers can cast *lower water* (as the 4th level priest spell) or *weather stasis* (as the 4th level priest spell detailed in *Player's Option: Spells & Magic*) once per day.
- At 9th level, wave rangers can cast *airy water* (as the 5th level wizard spell) or *control winds* (as the 5th level priest spell) once per day.
- At 14th level, wave rangers can cast *control weather* or *conjure air elemental* (as the 7th level priest spells) or *conjure water elemental* or *tsunami* (as the 7th level priest spells detailed in *Player's Option: Spells & Magic*) once per day.

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LONG ISLAND Area Gamers <http://www.io.com/mjg/liag> is an informal network of gamers in the Long Island and surrounding area. We meet monthly at a local coffeehouse and run an email mailing list

Player's Handbook. Contact: John Suter, 8 Spring Hill Court, Randolph, NJ 07869.

SELLING: BIRTHRIGHT player's secrets of Binsada, Endier, Medoere, Tuornen, Tolinie, and Ilien. Also selling "Cities of the Sun" campaign expansion, and three adventures: Warlock of the Stonecrowns, The Sword of Roele, and Sword and Crown. All except campaign expansion still in plastic. Write for prices or make an offer: Wayne Hansen, 1233 W. 3rd St., Red Wing, MN 55066.

FOR SALE: Unopened box "Rebels and Reinforcements" for BLOOD WARS® game plus numerous SPELLFIRE® cards. Everything from 1st to Nightstalkers, inexpensive. Write: Mike Bunce, 20 Somerset Pl., Logan, UT 84341.

23-YEAR-OLD VA prisoner seeking correspondence with worldwide gamers for exchange of ideas. Also interested in receiveing membership in any PBM gaming clubs. Contact: <James@love-penn.com>. If you have old gaming magazines,

a genuine Thieves' Guild can provide? Then send your ideas, suggestions and heartfelt hurrahs to me at: petergamer@prodigy.net or Peter Parker, 4211 E. Broad apt.210, Columbus, OH 43213

I AM DAVE. AND I AM LOOKING FOR CURRENT TSR, AD&D, AND *RAVENLOFT* PLAYERS IN THE DAVIS/WEBER COUNTY AREAS IN UTAH. YOU CAN REACH ME AT 1190 W. 1700 S., SYRACUSE, UT, 84075.

FOR SALE: RAVENLOFT Products. Bleak House: Death of Rudloph van Richten ($15.00), House of Strahd, From the Shadows, Roots of Evil and Thoughts of Darkness (All for $10.00). All are in mint condition. First come, First Serve. No trades please. Contact Jeffrey Williams at 1555 Rochelle Ave #174 Zip 89119, P.O. Box 16003 Las Vegas, NV 89101; 1-702-650-5268; or <devilboy@anv.net>. I have an answering machine, so please leave a message.

WANTED: I am looking for a complete and well cared for copy of the

Owensboro and surrounding counties interested in helping set up a Game Day. Open to any suggestions available. Wanting a variety of games for the event. Interested? Write: Willaim Hilliard, 1959 Fox Hollow Rd., Island, KY, 42350. Call: 502/486-3275.

GREETINGS fellow gamers. I seek to join an existing gaming group or form a new one in the Staunton-Augusta county area of Virginia. My interests include almost any fantasy games occurring in a Middle Ages setting, RAVENLOFT and FORGOTTEN REALMS foremost among them. I also seek anyone interested in assisting me with authoring tournaments, articles, and novels occurring in these settings. Interested parties please write: Chadwick V. Simmons, c/o Gideon's Manor, 2204 Bare St., Staunton, VA 24401-3764.

BOARD GAMES • GAME SUPPLEMENTS • CARD GAMES • MINIATURES • ADVENTURES • THE GAMING HALL OF FAME

Attention Gamers! It's time once again to select the best game and game-related releases of the past year (1997) for the annual Origins Awards. Please **vote for one release in each category**. Return your completed ballot by June 17. And feel free to photocopy this ballot for your own use or to pass it on to other gamers (only one ballot per person, though). Origins Award winners are announced at the ORIGINS national gaming convention–be there, or check summer issues of this magazine for the winners!

Deadline: June 17, 1998

ORIGINS AWARDS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN GAME DESIGN AND QUALITY

Best Abstract Board Game
__ Balanx ..... Mayfair
__ Kill Doctor Lucky ..... Cheapass Games
__ Lowenherz ..... Gold Sieber
__ Stock Market Guru ..... Avalon Hill
__ Survival of the Witless ..... Avalanche
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Historical Board Game
__ Euphrat & Tigris ..... Hans im Gluck
__ Home Before the Leaves Fall ..... Clash of Arms Games
__ Sam Grant ..... Columbia Games
__ Six Days of Glory ..... Clash of Arms Games/TOME
__ Successors ..... Avalon Hill
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game
__ BABYLON 5 Wars ..... Agents of Gaming
__ Princess Ryan's Star Marines ..... Avalon Hill
__ Roborally Grand Prix ..... Wizards of the Coast
__ Starship Troopers ..... Avalon Hill
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Trading Card Game
__ BABYLON 5 Collectible Card Game ..... Precedence
__ Dune: Eye of the Storm ..... Last Unicorn
__ Shadowrun Trading Card Game Limited Ed. ..... FASA
__ Warlords Trading Card Game ..... Iron Crown
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Traditional Card Game
__ Corporate Shuffle ..... Wizards of the Coast
__ Give Me the Brain ..... Cheapass Games
__ Groo: The Game ..... Archangel Entertainment
__ Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck and Card Game ..... U.S. Games Systems, Inc.
__ Titan: The Arena ..... Avalon Hill
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Card Game Expansion or Supplement
__ BattleTech: Mechwarrior ..... Wizards of the Coast
__ L5R—Time of the Void ..... Five Rings Publishing
__ Magic: the Gathering Portal ..... Wizards of the Coast
__ Magic: the Gathering Tempest ..... Wizards of the Coast
__ Middle-earth: The Lidless Eye ..... Iron Crown
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Historical Miniatures Rules
__ Battleground Rules ..... Easy Eight Enterprises
__ Battles of the Revolutionary & Napoleonic Wars ..... Clash of Arms Games
__ Crossfire ..... Quantam Publishing Company
__ Flint & Steel ..... Clash of Arms Games/TOME
__ High Noon ..... Tactical Conflict Systems
__ Red Star, Blue Sky ..... Simtac
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Miniatures Rules
__ Chronopia ..... Heartbreaker Hobbies
__ Deadlands: the Great Rail Wars ..... Pinnacle
__ Epic 40,000 ..... Games Workshop
__ Gorkamorka ..... Games Workshop
__ The Lost Toys ..... Inner City Game Designs
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Historical Figure Miniatures Series
__ 15mm ACW Personalities ..... Stone Mountain
__ 15mm American Revolution ..... Musket Miniatures
__ 6mm Adler Napoleonics ..... Stone Mountain
__ Charlie Company U.S. Army Figures ..... RAFM
__ GHQ Rebellion 10mm Napoleonics ..... GHQ Microarmor
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Figure Miniature
__ Dove Falconhand in Armor ..... Ral Partha
__ Golden Chaos Dragon Limited Edition ..... Ral Partha
__ High Elven Warlord ..... Ral Partha
__ Sisters of Battle Battle Squad (Seraphin) ..... Games Workshop
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Vehicle Miniature
__ AKU-1X Akuma ..... Ral Partha
__ Call of Cthulhu Roadster ..... RAFM
__ Cauldron Born ..... Ral Partha
__ GHQ Micronaut: CB-1 Alaska (USN 67) ..... GHQ Microarmor
__ Iceberg Silent Death Starship ..... RAFM
__ Longboat Silent Death Starship ..... RAFM
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Action Computer Game
__ 7th Legion ..... Microprose
__ Hexen II ..... Activision
__ Quake II ..... Activision
__ Star Trek Starfleet Academy ..... Interplay
__ Tomb Raider ..... Eidos Software
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Roleplaying Computer Game
__ Blade Runner ..... Westwood
__ Descent to Undermountain ..... Interplay
__ Fallout: A Post Nuclear Adventure ..... Interplay
__ Final Fantasy VII ..... Eidos Software
__ Ultima Online ..... Origins Systems
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Strategy Computer Game
__ Dark Reign ..... Activision
__ Emperor of the Fading Suns ..... Holistic
__ Sid Meier's Gettysburg ..... Firaxis
__ Imperialism ..... Strategic Simulations
__ Magic: the Gathering CD-ROM ..... Microprose
__ Panzer General II ..... Strategic Simulations
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Amateur Game Magazine
__ Alarums & Excursions ..... Lee Gold
__ Berg's Review of Games ..... Berg's Review of Games
__ Gaming Intelligence ..... Gaming Intelligence
__ Serendipity's Circle ..... Wheeality
__ Starry Wisdom ..... Chaosium
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Professional Game Magazine
__ Comics Retailer ..... Krause Publications
__ Dungeon Magazine ..... TSR
__ InQuest ..... Wizard Press
__ Knights of the Dinner Table Magazine ..... Kenzer & Co.
__ Pyramid Magazine ..... Steve Jackson
__ Shadis Magazine ..... Alderac
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best New Play-by-Mail Game
__ Cold War Battle Plan ..... Flying Buffalo, Inc.
__ Fire in the Galaxy ..... Tactical Simulations
__ Legends II ..... Midnight Games
__ Middle-earth PBM Fourth Age Circa 1000 ..... Game Systems, Inc.
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Ongoing Play-by-Mail Game
__ CTF 2187 ..... Advanced Gaming
__ Duelmasters ..... Reality Simulations
__ Hyborian War ..... Reality Simulations
__ Middle-earth PBM ..... Game Systems, Inc.
__ Star Web ..... Flying Buffalo, Inc.
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Game-Related Novel
__ Grave Covenant ..... FASA
__ Planar Powers ..... TSR, Inc.
__ Steel Rain ..... FASA
__ Tales from the Empire ..... West End Games
__ The Road to Hell ..... White Wolf
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Game-Related Short Work
__ A Bright Dream/A Dark Dream ..... Steve Jackson
Appearing in In Nomine
__ A Forty Share in Innsmouth ..... Chaosium
Appearing in Singers of Strange Songs
__ Crisis of Faith ..... Dream Pod 9
__ Independence Day ..... Pinnacle
__ Not Damned ..... White Wolf
Appearing in Dark Tyrants Anthology
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Roleplaying Adventure
__ Film Festival #1 (Honk Kong Action Theatre) ..... Event Horizon
__ Independence Day (Deadlands) ..... Pinnacle
__ Mob War (Shadowrun) ..... FASA
__ Tale of the Comet (AD&D) ..... TSR
__ The Great Modron March (AD&D) ..... TSR
__ The Medellin Agent (Millennium's End) ..... Chameleon Eclectic
Appearing in The Medellin Agent
__ The New Breed: Battle Before the Storm (Heavy Gear) ..... Dream Pod 9
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Roleplaying Game
__ Big Eyes, Small Mouth ..... Guardians of Order
__ Blue Planet ..... Biohazard Games
__ Domains of Dread ..... TSR
__ Legends of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game ..... Alderac
__ Saga Game Rules/Fate Deck ..... TSR
__ The Babylon Project ..... Chameleon Eclectic
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Best Roleplaying Supplement
__ A Magical Medley (FUDGE) ..... Grey Ghost
__ BattleTech Field Manual: Mercenaries (Mechwarrior) ..... FASA
__ Delta Green (Call of Cthulhu) ..... Pagan Publishing
__ Heroes of Sorcery (AD&D) ..... TSR
__ Rigger 2 (Shadowrun) ..... FASA
__ The Blood Wood (Earthdawn) ..... FASA
__ Write-in Title: _____
Manufacturer: _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State/Prov. _____
Zip _____ Country _____
Phone Number (____) _____
Signature _____

For more information on the Academy or the Origins Awards, contact us at the address below.

Ballots must be received by June 17, 1998. Mail your ballot to:

The Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design

P.O. Box 10262 Blacksburg, VA 24062
540.953.1658 www.gama.org/academy

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